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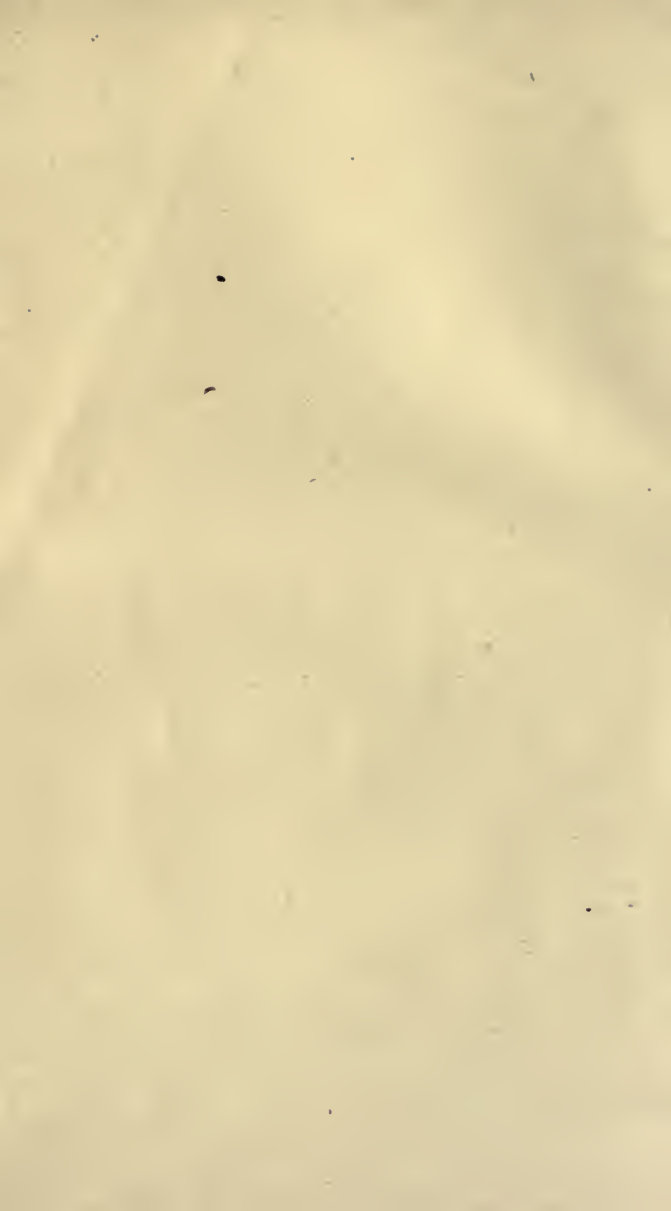
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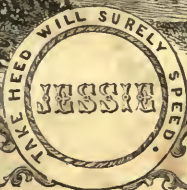




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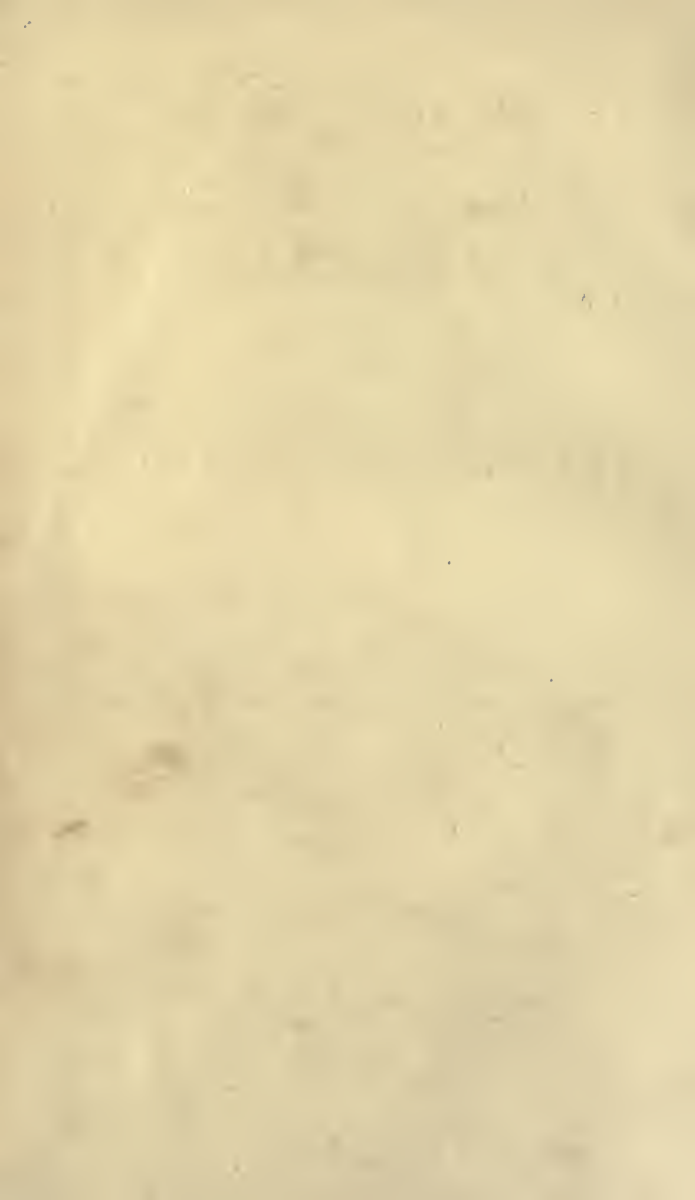
Aimwell Stories

By
Walter Aimwell



Could

Lincoln



The Aimwell Stories.

JESSIE;

OR,

TRYING TO BE SOMEBODY.

BY

WALTER AIMWELL,

AUTHOR OF "MARCUS," "WHISTLER," "ELLA," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BOSTON:

GOULD AND LINCOLN,

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P R E F A C E.

WHILE this series of books is designed to furnish a succession of pleasant and instructive lessons and recreations for boys and girls, each volume has also a specific aim, more or less prominently wrought into its woof. The special object of JESSIE is to kindle in the hearts of the young, especially the children of misfortune and poverty, a pure and noble ambition, and to encourage them to strive for that "good name" whose price is far above rubies, and that "conscience void of offence" which is of still more inestimable value.

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JESSIE.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW HOME.

IT was on a dull and cold morning in February, that Jessie Hapley, a girl between fourteen and fifteen years old, stood before a window in the farm-house of Mrs. Page, watching a couple of boys who were drawing a sled on which was lashed a trunk. The sled dragged heavily through the new-fallen snow, and when yet some distance off, the cord by which it was drawn suddenly snapped asunder. After a few moments' delay, the boys took a position behind their load, and pushed it along to its destination, without meeting with any further obstacles.

"Where will you have it, Jessie—up in your chamber?" inquired the oldest boy, as he and his companion landed the trunk in the entry.

"Yes, you may carry it up stairs, if you please," replied Jessie.

"I hope you have got something good in that trunk, Jessie,—it's heavy enough, if that's all," said the younger boy, when they came down from the chamber.

"Is it heavy?" inquired Jessie. "Well, I don't wonder—it contains all my gold, except this pin and ring, and you know gold is heavy."

"Is that it?" continued the boy, whose name was Ronald. "I didn't know but you had filled it with stones, to make us think you had got something valuable. They say rogues play that game sometimes, when they put up at hotels. But about that gold; how much is there of it?"

"Well, I can't tell you exactly how much there is, but I will show it to you some time, if you wish to see it," replied Jessie.

"Is it visible to the naked eye?" inquired the boy, with a roguish look.

"Of course it is," replied Jessie. "You can see it plain enough, but that is the best you can say about it."

This was an enigma which Ronald could not solve, and it was not until Jessie exhibited to him her portion of the precious metal, displayed upon the covers and edges of several books, that he comprehended the mystery.

The fact was, whatever else might have been Jessie's possessions, at this time, she was far from being rich in gold and silver, or any of the paper representatives of those metals. Within a period of about two months, a fearful train of calamities had overwhelmed the family to which she belonged. The oldest son, Samuel, a youth of sixteen, had committed a burglary in a neighboring town, for which he was now serving a sentence in prison. The youngest child, an interesting and lovely boy of nine, had sickened and died, at the beginning of the year. The father, who for many years had been a victim of intemperate habits, sought to drown his sorrows by still deeper draughts at the fountain of woe and death, and came to a dreadful end, a few weeks after his boy was laid in his frozen

grave. Mr. Hapley's farm and other property, on which there were heavy mortgages, were taken to pay his debts, and the widow and children were left homeless and moneyless.*

Jessie, and her brother Henry, a lad of thirteen, were the only children now living with their mother. A home was soon found for Henry, in the village, where he was to work for his board and clothes. Mrs. Hapley, whose health was poor, was invited to return to the home of her childhood, in another town, where her parents were still living. Jessie was at that time attending the village academy, with a view of fitting herself for the profession of teaching. With no slight struggle, she relinquished this cherished purpose of her heart, and, as the readiest way of supporting herself and aiding her mother, volunteered to work in a factory. But in this hour of extremity, a new door was opened to her. Mrs. Page and her family, who were next neighbors to the Hapleys, were so much interested in the welfare of Jessie, that they offered her a home for a season, on conditions that she could

* These events are more fully related in the fifth volume of this series, entitled, "Marcus; or the Boy-Tamer."

not well refuse. Her services in the family were to be considered an equivalent for her board, but she was to have the privilege of attending the academy. Her mother was to provide her with clothes, and there was a prospect that she would be able to offset her tuition bills, by rendering some assistance to the lower classes. It was thought that by this arrangement she would be enabled to enter upon her chosen work in less than a year.

On the morning with which our story opens, Mrs. Hapley had bidden her daughter farewell, and started for the home of her parents. It was not without a strange sinking of heart, and eyes blurred with tears, that Jessie took leave of her mother and her old home; but nothing of this was visible on her countenance, now. She was apparently as calm and cheerful as any of those around her.

The family of which Jessie had now become an inmate, comprised the following named persons: Mrs. Page, who was the widow of a sea-captain; her sister, Miss Fanny Lee, usually called Aunt Fanny; Marcus, Mrs. Page's son, a young man in his nineteenth year, who had just served his first term as assistant

teacher in the academy, of which he was a graduate; Ronald, an adopted son of Mrs. Page, about twelve years old; and Oscar Preston, a nephew of Mrs. Page, in his sixteenth year, who came to live with the family the previous fall. They lived upon a small farm, in one of the pleasant hill towns of Vermont, which we shall call Highburg.

Jessie at once began to busy herself with various household duties, taking hold almost as handily as though she had been at home. Knowing that constant occupation is a great security against desponding thoughts, Mrs. Page was careful to provide her with something to employ her time. It was "washing day," and of course there was no lack of work. In the course of the forenoon, Ronald came in, with his arms full of rope and bunting, and exclaimed:

"There, mother, I've got my flag, at last. But just see how dirty it is. Can't you wash it, right off, so I can have it all bright and clean for to-morrow?"

"Our washing is done, and on the line, and the suds are thrown away; so you had better let it be till next Monday," replied Mrs. Page.

"But who wants to hang up such a dirty thing as

that on Washington's birth-day?" continued Ronald. "We've got our staff almost ready, and we want to raise our flag to-morrow morning; but it's all soiled, and dingy—and here's a big rip in it, too. Why, mother, haven't you got any patriotism at all? I should think you'd consider it an honor to wash the stains out of your country's flag."

Mrs. Page smiled at this sally, but did not accede to Ronald's request.

"Could n't I wash it out for him, Mrs. Page?" inquired Jessie.

"You can, if you choose to," was the reply.

"That's right, Jessie—you ought to have three cheers for your patriotism, and I'll give 'em to you to-morrow, when I hoist the flag," said Ronald, as Jessie commenced preparations for the work.

Ronald detached the flag from the rope, and then went out to the barn to see how Oscar was getting on with the pole. He found it nearly ready for its place, although only the day before it was a young tree in the forest. As it was to be fastened to the gable of the barn, it was not very large, but was tall, straight, and rounded in a smooth and uniform man-

ner. Oscar was now inserting into the top of it a small pulley or grooved wheel for the line to run over. Ronald, meanwhile, went to work upon the cap that was to surmount the whole, which he made out of a wooden knob that belonged to an old bureau.

Before they had finished the staff, Jessie had washed the flag, and hung it upon the line. It was much improved in appearance. Soon after Marcus came along, and having examined the flag a minute or two, he entered the barn, saying:

"Ronald, I don't think you made much of a bargain when you bought that flag."

"You don't? Why, what is the matter with it?" inquired Ronald.

"Oh, it's an old thing, and it was n't made properly in the first place, either," replied Marcus.

"I don't care, so long as it's a flag," said Ronald. "I'll get that torn place mended, and then I guess it will do."

"I think it is altogether too large for your staff," continued Marcus.

"I don't think so," replied Ronald.

"Besides, it strikes me it is not in good proportion," added Marcus.

"I do n't care for that," replied Ronald.

"And it has got only twenty-nine stars, when there ought to be thirty-two,"* continued Marcus.

"Well, nobody would have noticed that if you had n't told us," added Ronald, somewhat vexed at these free criticisms of his flag.

"One star for every State in the Union, is the rule—I should n't suppose such a patriotic boy as you would ignore three of the States in the confederacy," added Marcus.

Ronald felt the force of these criticisms more than he was willing to admit. The purchase of the flag was his own individual enterprise. He gave in exchange for it sundry articles of personal property, and flattered himself that he had made a good trade. And so, in fact, he had, for flags cost more than Marcus imagined, and Ronald's, though somewhat dilapidated, was worth all that he gave for it. But Ronald did not feel quite at ease about his bargain, after what

*Thirty-two is the number at the time this is written, but there is a prospect of an early increase of our family of States, which happy event will of course add to the ever-enlarging galaxy of stars on our national banner.

Marcus had said. He soon after had a conference with Jessie, and the result was apparent in the evening, when that young lady undertook the task of making the flag over new.

Jessie was somewhat at a loss where to begin upon the novel job she had undertaken, and neither Ronald nor any of the family could give her much light upon the subject. Marcus soon came in, however, and his advice was sought.

"What do you propose to do with it?" was his first inquiry.

"I want to make it smaller, for one thing — you said it was too large," replied Ronald.

"Well," said Marcus, surveying the flag quite calmly, as it lay spread out upon the floor, "I'm afraid Jessie won't get much sleep to-night, if you intend to have it ready to hoist in the morning. She will have to rip the stripes apart, and make them all narrower; and then the blue field and the stars will be too large, and they must all be altered; but I don't see exactly how that is to be done, for you can't very well make the holes for the stars any smaller."

"But why can't we take off one or two stripes, and

cut a piece off the length, and let it go so?" inquired Jessie.

"There is one slight objection to that,—it would n't be an American flag," replied Marcus.

"Well, I do n't pretend to know much about the science of flags," said Jessie, smiling.

"You must have just thirteen stripes and thirty-two stars; did n't you know that?" inquired Ronald.

"The outside stripes must be red," continued Marcus. "That gives us seven red and six white stripes. The field for the stars should be square, and of just the width of the first seven stripes."

"This is right, then, as it is, and I do n't see how we can make it any smaller without spoiling it," said Jessie.

"I think it will bear shortening a little," added Marcus, "and that will make it look smaller, and give it better proportions, too. It should be just one half longer than it is broad. For instance, if it is four feet broad, it should be six feet long. Let us measure it, and see how it is."

The flag was found to be too long, as Marcus suspected. So Jessie cut off the superfluous part,

mended the rents, added three new stars to the field, and it was pronounced fit for service. Before sunrise, the next morning, it was run up to the top of the staff on the barn, amid the shouts of the boys. Soon after, the family were startled by a loud report from behind the barn. All ran to ascertain the cause, and it was found to proceed from a small cannon which Ronald had procured, in order to add *eclat* (which in this case means noise) to his celebration of Washington's birthday. He had kept this little secret entirely to himself, intending to surprise the family with this new proof of his patriotism. But the surprise did not prove quite so pleasant as he anticipated; for Marcus quickly took possession of the cannon and ammunition, and the young patriot found himself so severely condemned by all the family for playing with powder without leave, that he burst into tears, and betook himself for a while to the uncensuring society of the cows in the barn. So the bright sun of his hopes went into a cloud before breakfast!

It was noticed by all that Jessie did not eat much at the table that morning, and she did not appear to be in her usual good spirits. Ronald, too, was uncom-

monly sober, and altogether it did not seem much like a holiday. The flag, however, which was visible for a considerable distance, soon drew together several of the boys and girls of the neighborhood, and Ronald's lengthened countenance gradually assumed its wonted form. Among the visitors was Henry, Jessie's brother, who, after a while, inquired for his sister. Ronald went in search of her, but no one could tell him where she was. At length, having looked everywhere else, he ran up stairs, and thoughtlessly opened her chamber door, without asking permission. Jessie was there, and as the door opened, she closed a book that she held, with a startled look, and Ronald saw very plainly that she had been weeping, although she quickly turned her face away. Frightened at the impropriety of which he had been guilty, in thus intruding upon her privacy, he made a ludicrous attempt at apology.

"I — I did n't know you were here," he said; "but I've been hunting for you all over the house. Henry is down stairs, and wants to see you."

"You may ask him to come up here," replied Jessie, without turning her face towards Ronald.

Henry went up to Jessie's room, and remained with her some time. When he came out, he, too, seemed more sober and silent than usual, and Ronald half suspected, from his looks, that he had been crying. And so he had. The fact was, both he and his sister were suffering from that distressing malady — homesickness. It seems strange that one who has exchanged a poor home for a better one, should pine after what he has relinquished; but so it is. We cannot separate ourselves from the friends with whom we have always lived, and the associations and haunts with which we have for years been familiar, without suffering more or less from homesickness, no matter into how excellent hands we may have fallen. And this feeling is sometimes very prolonged and distressing, especially with those who are exiled from their native land. A few years ago, a German emigrant in Boston became insane from homesickness, and bought a little boat, called a dory, which he fitted up in a peculiar manner, with oars, sails, a canvas covering, and provisions for a fortnight's subsistence. He intended to put to sea in this frail skiff, hoping, as he said, to reach his fatherland in twenty-two days.

When asked how he should supply himself with food, after his stock was exhausted, he said he had a little money to buy more. Perhaps he thought he should find a half-way house on the great deep, or meet a baker's or butcher's cart, on the voyage.

Marcus had been sitting for an hour or more before a small portable desk — a parting gift from his late pupils — which lay open upon the table in the sitting-room, with papers and books scattered around it. He had been engaged in studying a Greek lesson ; for he intended at some future day to enter college in an advanced class, and with this view was continuing his studies. He was now leaning back in his chair, with his eyes intently fixed upon the ceiling, while his thoughts were busily engaged in trying to devise some way to relieve the melancholy of Jessie, and to dispel the shadows which from sympathy seemed to be stealing over other members of the family. After remaining in this position about ten minutes, he stepped into the kitchen, and held a short consultation with his mother and his aunt. He then went out to the woodshed, where Oscar and Ronald were at work, and accosted them with —

“Boys, what do you say to getting up a little celebration of Washington’s birth-day, this evening?”

“Good! First-rate!” cried the impetuous Ronald, without giving Oscar a chance to reply. “What kind of a celebration shall we have? If I were you, I’d have the whole house illuminated, or else I’d build a great bonfire on the hill, that will show off all over town — would n’t that be grand, Oscar?”

“That is n’t exactly the kind of a celebration that I was thinking of,” said Marcus. “What I propose is, to invite in a few of our young acquaintances, and have an oration, and some appropriate music, and perhaps a tableau or two. How does that strike you, Oscar?”

“I think it’s a good idea; but who can get an oration ready, in so little time?” inquired Oscar.

“O, we can manage that — the oration will be the easiest part to arrange,” replied Marcus.

“But why could n’t we have a bonfire, too? — I’ll take the whole care of it,” interposed Ronald, who just now thought more of material than mental illumination.

“I am afraid that might draw together more com-

pany than we want," replied Marcus, "and so interfere with our indoor arrangements. I think you had better give up that idea."

Ronald readily assented to this, and Marcus appointed him and Oscar a "committee of arrangements," to invite guests, and make other preparations for the festival, giving them such instructions as he deemed necessary. He afterwards added Jessie to this committee, who entered into the plan with much interest. Marcus then returned to his studies, leaving the affair almost entirely in the hands of the committee.

The committee at once began to discuss the order of arrangements, and the leading features of the celebration were soon decided upon. The work of preparation was then divided among the committee, a particular line of duties being assigned to each member. As the front parlor, usually called "the best room," was the largest apartment, it was selected as the place of entertainment, and Jessie at once commenced preparing it for the occasion. She removed to this room an engraved portrait of Washington, which hung in one of the chambers, and then de-

spatched Ronald to the woods for some evergreens,



with which to adorn its old black frame. She also found an old engraving of the Washington mansion at Mount Vernon, among a large collection of prints in Miss Lee's closet, which she had liberty to overhaul. When Ronald returned, she made a pretty frame of ever-green for this, and hung it by the side of the portrait. A small work table, intended to serve as the orator's desk, was placed directly in front of these

pictures, so that one would appear on either side of him. The wall back of the table was further ornamented by a large star in evergreen, and several wreaths and festoons were displayed in other parts of the room.

Jessie seemed in better spirits at noon, and talked with much interest of the anticipated celebration. The committee continued their labors in the afternoon, and apparently had about as much on their hands as they could conveniently manage. This was especially true of Ronald, who did not seem content to do less than three or four things at once. Before sunset, however, the business was finished; and when Marcus came home, he found on his desk the following paper, in the handwriting of Jessie, with the exception of one line — the last — which was evidently an interpolation by Ronald:

PROGRAMME

FOR THE

CELEBRATION OF WASHINGTON'S BIRTH-DAY.

1. Music — "Washington's Grand March" — piano-forte.
2. Reading of a sketch of Washington's Life, by Jessie Hapley.
3. Music — "Hail Columbia" — sung by the Company.
4. Webster's Oration on Washington, read by Mr. Marcus Page.
5. Music — "My country, 't is of thee" — sung by the company.
6. Tableau.
7. Music — "Yankee Doodle" — piano-fort.
8. Going Home with the Girls.

Early in the evening the company assembled, embracing eight or ten lads and misses from the neigh-

borhood, among whom was Henry Hapley. The old parlor never looked more beautiful, with its generous wood-fire blazing upon the hearth, its extra display of lamps disposed around the room, its decorations in evergreen and bunting, (for Ronald's flag was hauled down at sunset, and now figured as drapery around the "orator's desk,") and its rows of smiling faces duly arranged in audience fashion. The programme was carried out in a style that gave the utmost satisfaction. One of the guests, a young lady, furnished the instrumental portion of the music, while all joined in the singing. By way of refreshing the memories of the audience, Jessie read from a book a brief summary of the leading events in Washington's life, concluding by reading a poem on the same subject, from a popular English authoress, (Miss Eliza Cook,) commencing,

"Land of the west! though passing brief
The record of thine age,
Thou hast a name that darkens all
On history's wide page!"

The oration, which was well delivered by Marcus, consisted of the principal portion of Webster's elo-

quent address on the centennial anniversary of the birth-day of Washington. The tableau was exhibited in an adjoining room, the door being opened to the "audience," when the figure was arranged. It was a scene that had been enacted at a Christmas party in which most of the people of the town participated, two months previous. The figure represented was "Liberty," which was personated by a beautiful girl, arrayed in flowing antique drapery, holding with one hand a staff, on the top of which hung a liberty cap, and with the other hand supporting a shield bearing the United States arms. As the company were crowded around the door,—which they were not allowed to pass,—gazing at the tableau, Rover, a handsome spaniel, who had been sleeping all the evening under a table in the room devoted to "Liberty," now came forth to see what the stir was all about. At a sly signal from his young master, Ronald, he saluted the goddess with one of his loudest barks, at which everybody laughed except the statue-like figure; and it is not improbable that she moved the muscles of her face a trifle, for Rover seemed suddenly to recognize her and, wagging his shaggy tail,

he lay down by her side, close to the shield, as much as to say, —

“Ah, yes, I understand it, now. This is Miss Liberty, and I am bound to be her protector and defender.”

This unexpected addition to the tableau was received with a shout that upset the gravity even of Liberty herself, and she joined in the laugh, while the piano-forte struck up “Yankee Doodle” in the liveliest style, and the guests began to hunt up their hoods and caps, in anticipation of the grand finale smuggled into the programme by Ronald, who, by the way, in consideration of his tender years, was excused from any participation in *that* performance.

So ended the memorable twenty-second. There were half a dozen sound sleepers in the house, that night, but dull Care and the dolorous Blues and Dumps could find no chance to lodge there!

CHAPTER II.

SOMETHING ABOUT DIARIES.

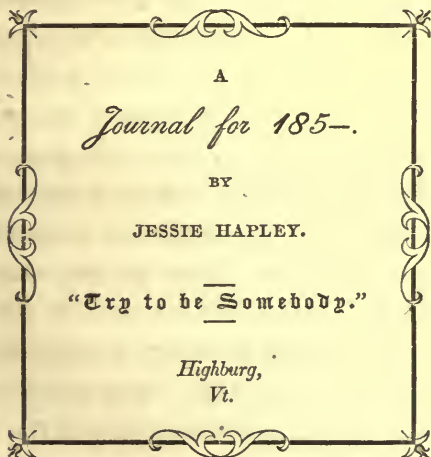
JESSIE had one secret that she preserved very carefully from even her most intimate friends. She kept a "journal," or daily record of her life. Not that she was ashamed to have this known, but regarding it as a strictly private matter, she preferred to keep it entirely to herself. She was induced to commence keeping a journal by some remarks made by Mr. Upton, the preceptor of the academy, to his older scholars, near the close of the previous year. He recommended the practice of journalizing very highly, and mentioned quite a number of benefits that were usually derived from it, by the young, the chief of which were these :

1. It aids in acquiring an improved and distinctive handwriting.

2. It promotes ease and rapidity of composition.
3. It assists the young to acquire and retain knowledge.
4. It cultivates habits of thought and observation.
5. It encourages habits of system and method.
6. It is often of great value in after life, when we wish to recall facts, events, impressions, etc., of earlier years.
7. As a history of one's life, it must always possess great interest.

Jessie at once procured a small blank book, determined to put the advice in practice at the beginning of the year. Supposing that every book ought to have a title-page, she set apart the first ruled page of her journal for this purpose, and at sundry odd moments inscribed upon it, in the handsomest characters she could make, a title expressive of its object. Jessie was tolerably expert with the pen, and her best efforts with this implement were by no means devoid of merit. But you must not suppose that they were chiefly remarkable for the fantastic shapes of the letters, or elaborate shadings, or fanciful and intricate scrawls, and other frippery. Her taste was rather for

the chaste, graceful and simple, than for the grotesque and the tawdry. To illustrate this, I will show you the title-page of her Journal, or rather a fac simile of it, reduced in size, if the printer can imitate it with his types. Here it is:



I suppose the motto which Jessie inscribed upon her title-page will strike some minds as being both too ambitious and too indefinite, to say nothing of its inelegance. To her, however, it had a history and a significance that rendered it quite appropriate for the

place. Its history was as follows. There was a girl attending the academy, named Abby Leonard, who came from a distant city, and whose parents were reputed to be very rich. She was fifteen years old, had more and better dresses than any other girl in town, and prided herself on her superior gentility and refinement. She was a sad dunce, it is true, but her ample stock of self-esteem did not seem to suffer in the least from that circumstance, and in spite of it she contrived to wield a pretty potent influence over the other girls of the academy. When Jessie became a pupil, and it was whispered from one to another that she was a scholar of unusual promise, Abby contemptuously remarked:

“Oh, it’s that drunken Hapley’s daughter, is n’t it? I wonder who pays the bills? Well, I don’t think I shall associate with such folks, if they do feel smart. If there’s anything I despise, it’s to see a poor girl all the time trying to be somebody.”

This cruel remark was quickly reported to Jessie, by some well-meaning but inconsiderate friend. Foolish as it was, it entered her sensitive heart like an arrow, and for days and nights she tried in vain to

dislodge the poisoned shaft. But at length she was fortunate enough to find a complete antidote for the envenomed wound. She had studied until late in the evening, and on retiring, her wakeful thoughts refused to be composed, and the old ogre which had haunted her of late, returned to torment her. Then she resolutely and calmly said to herself:

“I will endure this no longer. Henceforth I *will* ‘try to be somebody,’ if I never have tried before; not in the foolish sense that Abby Leonard meant, but in a higher and nobler one. Her taunt shall furnish me with a motto and a spur. I will show to her and all my acquaintances that I have no ambition to become a fine lady, or to affect gentility, or to pass for what I am not. I will show to them that even a poor girl may aspire to something better than these. The ‘somebody’ that I try to be, shall possess a pure heart and a spotless character. She shall, if possible, reach an honorable, independent and useful position. She shall make her influence felt in the world for good. She shall win the love and respect of those who know her. The poor, the suffering and the erring shall always find in her a friend. But whether she suc-

ceeds in all these things or not, her life shall be strictly governed by christian principles, and she shall always patiently submit to the will of God;" and Jessie concluded her soliloquy with a silent prayer that no unworthy motive might mingle with the purpose she had formed, and that she might be enabled to adhere to her resolution through life.

From that hour, "Try to be somebody" was Jessie's motto. The sting was at once withdrawn from her wounded spirit, and the ogre was suddenly transformed into an angel of light. The weeks of the academical term flew swiftly by, but ere half of them had sped, the aristocratic Miss Leonard manifested not only a willingness but a desire to associate with "that drunken Hapley's daughter," little suspecting that her thoughtless and cruel remark on the first day of the term had ever reached the ears of Jessie.

The first record Jessie was called to make in her journal was a very sad one. On the afternoon of New-Year's day, her youngest brother, Benjamin, fell asleep in the arms of his mother, never more to awake in this world, until the dead shall arise from their graves. For a day or two, all thoughts of the

journal vanished from her mind ; but when the first outburst of grief was past, she found a melancholy satisfaction in recording the incidents of Benny's sickness and death, and from that time she continued her daily entries without intermission.

In the remarks which Mr. Upton made to his scholars on keeping journals, he said there were several ways of doing this. The diaries of some people, he said, were merely a very brief and dry record of events. Supposing one of his scholars to keep a diary after this style, he said something like the following would be a fair specimen of its pages :

SPECIMEN OF A DIARY — IN DRY MEASURE

"Monday, Dec. 20. — Cloudy and cold. Attended academy all day. Studied in the evening."

"Tuesday, Dec. 21. — Pleasant, but very cold. Attended the academy, as usual. Went over to Sarah Cobb's and spent the evening."

"Wednesday, Dec. 22. — It snowed a little in the forenoon. I studied an hour in the morning, and then went to school. In the afternoon pa carried us to ride. Got a lesson in the evening, and then read till bed-time."

Mr. Upton, who was in a rather funny mood, said this might be called a diary in dry measure. Another method of keeping a journal he illustrated somewhat after this fashion, denominating it a

SPECIMEN OF A DIARY — IN LONG MEASURE.

“Monday, Dec. 20. — The weather is really dismal. The sun has not shown himself to-day, and it is so cold it is of no use to try to keep warm. I meant to have had an hour for study in the morning, but it was so cloudy and dark that I over-slept myself and lost it. It seems as if the mornings were always cloudy, when the days are shortest. I shall be thankful when they begin to lengthen. How many precious hours I waste abed, when the days are so short! I attended the academy morning and afternoon, and got through tolerably well with all the recitations, though I thought I should break down in grammar. I do wish I could take more interest in grammar, but I don't think I shall ever like it. I suppose it is a necessary study, but I think it is the driest and hardest one we have. I wore my new plaid winter dress to school, to-day, for the first time. The girls all think it is pretty, and so do I. I fixed my hair in a new way, this morning, which I think becomes me much better than the old way though John laughed at it until he got me almost

angry. I wonder that father will let that boy plague me so. After tea I spent two hours in trying to learn my history lesson, but did not get it perfectly, after all. I think it is too bad to give us such long lessons. Two pages and a half, full of hard names, is enough to try anybody's patience. I got sleepy over it, and went to bed at nine o'clock.

"*Tuesday, Dec. 21.*— We have had a pleasant day, at last, but such a cold one! I ought to have got up early, and looked over my history lesson again, but it was so awful cold I dreaded to, and so I laid abed till ma called me to breakfast. - Somehow, all my good early-rising resolutions vanish, these cold mornings. I had a terrible time getting to school, and for a while I really thought I had frozen my nose. It actually felt stiff. The academy was so cold, that Mr. Upton let those of us who sit back come forward and gather around the stove to warm ourselves. Then he made all the scholars form a procession, and march around the room half a dozen times, in double quick time, to quicken our blood. I missed once in history, just as I expected, but was marked perfect in all the other recitations. I went over to Sarah Cobb's and spent the evening. She sent for me to come, as she was going to be alone. We sewed, and talked, and had a good time ; but we got terribly frightened, just before the folks got back. - We thought we heard steps

around the house, for two or three minutes. We listened, and kept hearing strange noises, and knew there must be a man around, but we wondered why he did not knock at the door, if he had come with good intentions. Pretty soon he did knock, sure enough, and such a knock! We thought he was banging at the door with a club. Sarah was frightened out of her wits, and declared she would not go to the door, and so did I. At last she went into the entry, and mustered courage enough to say, 'Who's there?' Nobody answered, but immediately after there were three tremendous raps, louder than the first. Sarah says she thought the door would be broken down the next time, and so she opened it, when behold, there stood old Deacon Meleher, who had come to borrow some spearmint for his wife! The old gentleman is quite infirm, and that is the reason he was so long in getting to the door, after we first heard him; and he is so deaf, that I suppose he does not know how loud he knocks at people's doors with his big cane. But I would not go through such a fright again for a good deal. Mr. Cobb soon returned, and brought me home in his sleigh.

"*Wednesday, Dec. 22.*—More snow! Oh, dear, I wish it would never snow any more—I am tired of the sight of it. Two or three inches fell this forenoon, and then the sun came out bright. As I was

away last evening, I *had* to get up this morning, and study my geography lesson. Mr. Upton says he wishes us to study at least two hours every day, out of school, and I should think he meant we should, by the long lessons he gives us. I only half got my lesson, before it was time to go to school; but I made out to finish it, before we were called to recite. I was marked perfect in all my lessons, to-day. There is real satisfaction, after all, in being able to give a perfect recitation, if it does cost some labor. I think I have improved some this term, in this respect. As father says I am not going to school after this winter, I must make the best of my advantages, while they last. How thankful I ought to be for them! After dinner, father tackled up Bessy, and took mother, John and me in the sleigh, and carried us to ride. We went about two miles beyond Mr. Clarkson's mill, on the Dodgeville road, to where Mr. Rogers lives. Father had some business there, but Mr. Rogers was away, and so he did not accomplish anything. We saw Mrs. Rogers's baby. It is as fat as butter, and is a real cunning little thing; but it was not dressed neatly, at all. It is strange how little taste some people have. Father says looks are of no consequence, if the child is only kept comfortable, but I don't believe he really means it. He likes to be on the opposition, and got me into an argument. We had a

real nice ride, but it was very cold coming home. I do wish I could have a good warm pair of fur mittens—I think I really need them. Father says I might make them myself, but I am sure I never could do it. It took all of two hours to get my philosophy lesson in the evening. Then I had an hour to read the Advertiser. As usual, it was half filled up with politics. I don't see why they want to publish such dry stuff. But I found two or three good things in it, and a long list of articles advertised for Christmas and New Year's gifts. How I should like to take my pick from them!"

"There is still another method of keeping a journal," said Mr. Upton, "which, by way of distinction from the others, we may call a diary in solid measure. I will give you an illustration of it, and we will suppose the young lady to pass through the same scenes that the others record:"

SPECIMEN OF A DIARY—IN SOLID MEASURE.

"*Monday, Dec. 20.* — Cold and cloudy. I intended to study an hour before going to school, but as usual, these short mornings, I over-slept myself. However, I got through my recitations tolerably well. I got one or two new ideas on grammar, to-day. Mr. Up-

ton says 'had rather' is a very vulgar expression, although it is often used by people who ought to know better. 'I had rather go' — *had go* — what tense is that? 'I would rather go,' is the correct phrase. 'Had better,' he says, is also bad grammar. He says he sometimes hears the girls say such a dress or bonnet is 'tasty,' but there is no such word — we should say tasteful. I studied my history lesson two hours in the evening, but did not quite master it. I was tired and sleepy, and I am afraid I did not apply my mind very closely to it.

"*Tuesday, Dec. 21.* — Pleasant, but the coldest day yet, this winter. Thermometer 3° below zero, at sunrise. The almanac says 'winter commences' to-day, and I should think it did, in good earnest. This is the shortest day of the year, the sun having reached its greatest southern declination. Mr. Upton explained it to us, this morning. I was perfect in all my recitations except history, in which I missed one question. It is strange how we go on mispronouncing words for a long time, without discovering our error. Our history lesson to-day had a good deal to say about *magna charta*, the great charter of liberty which the English barons compelled King John to sign; and it turned out that only two in the class knew how to pronounce *charta*. I always supposed the *ch* should be pronounced as in chart, but it seems

they have the sound of *k*. *Distich* is another word that I never knew how to pronounce until to-day. It occurred in our reading lesson, this morning, and I pronounced the *ch* as in stitch; but Mr. Upton corrected me, and told me to call it *distick*. I could not believe he was right, until I looked into the large dictionary. I wish I could learn as easily as some of the scholars do. While we were reciting history, several of us missed, and Mr. Upton asked us if we had studied two hours out of school, according to the rule. By-and-by he came to Jerry Hall, who recited so well that Mr. Upton said, 'There's a boy that has studied his two hours, I am very certain.' 'No, sir, I did n't,' said Jerry, 'I only read it over twice; that's all that I ever study my history lessons.' And yet I spent two hours over it, and did not learn it perfectly, even then. I stayed with Sarah Cobb in the evening, as she was alone. When the family got back, Mr. C. brought me home in his sleigh.

"*Wednesday, Dec. 22.* — A little more snow fell in the forenoon, but the afternoon was pleasant. I got up early and studied an hour, before school-time. My recitations were all perfect. After dinner, father took us all to ride. We went as far as Mr. Rogers's house, on the Dodgeville road. We stopped there, and warmed ourselves, and on the whole, had a pleasant time. I noticed that the snow-birds were very

plenty and lively, this afternoon. Father says that is a sign of a storm. These birds are not the same as the little chipping sparrows that are around here in summer. I always supposed they were the same, but father says it is a mistake. He says the snow-birds go to the Arctic regions in the spring, and breed, and do not come back again till winter. I studied a philosophy lesson, in the evening, about two hours, and then read the 'Advertiser' till bed-time."

After giving these illustrations of the different methods of journalizing, Mr. Upton said any one of them was better than no diary, but there was a marked difference in their value. No. 1, he said, was dry, bare, and uninteresting—a mere skeleton; useful, it is true, but not half so useful as it might be. No. 2 was too wordy, and recorded too many trivial things, and dealt too much in moral reflections that seemed to be lugged in for effect. It was quite a tax on one's time and patience to keep such a journal, and perseverance in so serious an undertaking was almost too much to expect. No. 3 came nearer to the true idea of a diary, which should be a register of daily observations as well as occurrences—a record of

ideas as well as events. This was the system, "solid measure," which he recommended; and it was this that Jessie took as her model, when she began the experiment of keeping a journal.

CHAPTER III.

SNOW AND ICE.

ONE day Ronald and Henry, Jessie's brother, took it into their heads to build a large snow-house in the yard back of the house. It was to be capacious enough to receive half-a-dozen boys at once, and so high as to admit of their standing upright within it. There was plenty of snow all around, and by working diligently with their shovels about an hour, they accumulated a pretty large heap. They had beat it down hard with their shovels, as they piled it up, so that it was quite solid. But after working harmoniously together, all this time, some differences of opinion at length began to arise between the two builders. Henry wanted to pile on more snow, and make the house larger. Ronald insisted that it was large enough, now. Henry, who was taller than Ronald,

declared that he should not be able to stand up straight in it. Ronald told him not to be alarmed about that, for in digging out the inside, he meant to go clean down to the ground, which would make the hut nearly two feet higher than it appeared to be.

So Ronald carried his point, and Henry yielded somewhat reluctantly. They worked together again for a while, though not quite so merrily as before, smoothing and rounding off the pile into a regular shape. But when this was completed, they again began to dispute. Not that either of them was of a quarrelsome disposition, but there was an honest difference of opinion between them, and, as will sometimes happen in such cases, each was more ready to argue his own side than to listen to the other. Henry was for throwing a quantity of water upon the heap, by which means the outside would be turned into solid ice, as the water froze. He proposed to do this now, and to leave the work of excavation until another day. But Ronald thought the heap was compact and solid enough as it was, and it would only be throwing away labor to put water upon it. He determined to dig it out at once; and having marked a place for the door,

he forthwith began to hollow out the hut, without further argument. Henry stood leaning upon his shovel,



apparently not much pleased with the independent spirit displayed by Ronald; but he said little, and offered no further assistance.

Such was the position of affairs, when footsteps were heard on the other side of the fence, and Ronald, looking over, spied Jessie, who had evidently set out for a walk.

"Where are you going, Jessie?" he inquired.

"Down to the pond, to see the ice-boat," replied Jessie.

"Hold on a minute and I'll go, too," said Ronald, throwing down his shovel, and brushing the snow from his clothes.

"That's right—I should like company," replied Jessie. "Wont you come, too, Henry?"

"I can't—it's about time for me to go home," replied Henry.

"Well, don't you touch my snow-house, while I'm gone, will you?" interposed Ronald.

"*Your* snow-house, I should think!" retorted Henry, in a sneering tone.

"Yes, it is mine, for it's on mother's land, and you've no right to come into the yard, if I tell you not to," replied Ronald.

"It's your mother's land, is it? I thought she died in the poor-house, years ago," responded Henry, with

a bitter look that did not seem to sit at all naturally upon that open, good-natured face.

"Well, you touch it if you dare, that's all," replied Ronald, with an angry look; and leaping over the fence, he ran to overtake Jessie, who had walked on, and had heard none of this ill-natured conversation.

To explain Henry's ungenerous fling about Ronald's mother, it should be mentioned that the parents of that boy were poor French Canadian emigrants, who were suddenly carried off by a fever, in Highburg, leaving their only child, Ronald, at the age of eight years, homeless and friendless. He was a singularly bright and lively boy, and Marcus Page took such a fancy to him, that he induced his mother to adopt the orphan. Never having received much training, Ronald had many wild and strange ways, and had fallen into some bad habits, though his disposition was naturally affectionate, kind-hearted and docile. Marcus, from the first, exerted a great influence over him, acting the part of teacher and father to him; and from his success in making a good boy of this little semi-savage, he earned the name of "the Boy-Tamer."

Ronald's anger was somewhat cooled off, by the

time he overtook Jessie, although he was not yet in a very pleasant mood. He looked back several times, to see what Henry was about, but the latter stood leaning upon the fence, apparently undecided what to do. Jessie asked several questions about the snow-house, as they walked along. Although Ronald did not seem inclined to say much about it, he was careful to give her no intimation of the quarrel that had arisen. She had been recently reading a volume of Arctic travels, and Ronald's snow-house reminded her of the huts of snow in which the Esquimaux live.



She explained to him the manner in which they are built. They are circular in shape, rising in the form

of a dome, and are built wholly of ice and snow. We give a representation of one nearly completed. The picture also shows a finished hut, in the distance, and the low and narrow entrance to a third, in the foreground. It does not seem as though these snow-hovels could be much more comfortable to dwell in than the one which Ronald and Henry built; but the poor Esquimaux, though living in a climate far colder than the coldest in the United States, are glad to make their homes in these rude huts, which seem fit only for boys' playthings. An American traveller in those regions says that although these snow-houses might not be considered exactly comfortable, particularly by those who had a fondness for dry clothing, and for joints that did not creak with frost in the morning, yet he confessed he had often slept soundly in them.

From snow-houses the conversation glided to ice-boats, which are sleds or boats constructed to sail on the ice. One of these had been recently rigged up by a young man in town, and as it was a novelty, it was the object of Jessie's walk to see it. Ronald had already seen it, and explained its construction to her; and she, in return, told him how in Arctic expeditions

the sledges were sometimes provided with sails, by which the men were greatly aided in their tedious journeys over vast fields of ice.

Merry voices soon informed Jessie and Ronald that they were in the vicinity of the pond. Round Hill Pond, it was called, taking its name from a prominent hill near its borders. It was a beautiful sheet of water, surrounded on all sides by hilly land, much of which was covered with forest trees. At this time, there was quite a large gathering of young men and boys upon its glassy surface. There were parties of merry skaters, performing their quick and graceful evolutions, or cutting fantastic figures upon the ice. Some of the skaters had bats and balls, and others were drawing sleds, on which were seated their little brothers or sisters. There were also some famous coasts on the pond, which many of the boys were improving. Starting high up on the steep sides of the pond, they came down with a railroad speed that sent them whizzing across the narrow part of the pond; and here, fortunately, was another icy hill-side, by which they were returned to their first starting place, in the same way they came. I cannot say what would have been the consequences of a collision between

these two opposite trains of coasters; but as each side had its own track, and the law of keeping to the right was enforced by common consent, they got along without anything more serious than an occasional narrow escape from an accident.

But the great attraction of the pond was the ice-boat. This was a large, rough sled, shaped somewhat like a flat-iron, and instead of runners, having three skate irons, two behind and one forward. The forward skate could be turned, and thus served as a rudder to steer the craft. Near the centre of the sled there was a mast, capable of supporting a large, square sail. The sail was dropped, and the ice-boat was at rest, near the edge of the pond, when Jessie and Ronald arrived. They went down upon the ice, to have a nearer view of it, and found the young man who made it getting ready for a sail. Several persons were standing around, one of whom, a middle-aged man, was endeavoring to convince the youth that he sailed his craft wrong end first.

"Why, look here, John," said the man, "does n't it stand to reason that the rudder of a boat ought to be in the stern? Now just answer me that, will you?"

"Well," replied the boy, availing himself of the Yankee's privilege of answering a question by asking another, "supposing you were making an ox-sled with a set of double runners, would you put the traverse runners behind, because you were going to steer with them?"

"That's nothing to do with it," replied the other; "of course I would n't build an ox-sled as I would a sail-boat. But, let me tell you, I've seen these things before to-day. I was out in Iowa, one winter, and crossed the Mississippi in a sail-sled, a good deal like this, only she had the two stationary runners in front, and the single one behind. She was running as a ferry-boat, and she flew across the river like a bird. And then she'd mind her rudder just as quick as any boat you ever saw; you could whirl her right about in a moment."

"So I can my boat," replied the youth; "and as to that, I don't believe it makes any difference whether the steering runner is in front or behind. Come, jump on, Mr. Grant, and you shall see for yourself," added the young man, as he hoisted his sail.

"No, you'll sail better with one than with two on board, with this wind," replied the man.

“Well, Jessie, you’re light — I’ll take you, if you want to have a sail,” continued the young man.

“No, I thank you, I had rather stand here and see you sail,” replied Jessie.

“Yes, go, Jessie,” interposed Ronald; “I would, if he asked me.”

John did not take the hint, but setting his sail to the breeze, and giving his craft a push by means of a boat-hook, he started on his trip alone. There was a light wind, and the ice-boat, after a few minutes, got up a pretty good speed, sailing along very handsomely at the rate of four or five miles an hour, which is a little faster than a good walker usually travels. The young man frequently changed her course, and conclusively showed that the craft obeyed her rudder, if it was, as Mr. Grant asserted, in the wrong end of the boat.

As the sun was nearing the western horizon, Jessie and Ronald did not wait to see the return of the ice-boat, but started for home after it had disappeared behind the hills. They had not proceeded far, when they discovered, with astonishment and awe, that since they had passed securely over the road, but

little more than an hour before, a fearful snow-slide had taken place at a particular point, burying up the highway for nearly a dozen rods, to the depth of twenty feet! The road at this place wound around the foot of a steep hill, upon the side of which the deep snow had become softened by the afternoon sun, and slipping from the grasp of its icy moorings, had swept down from the heights above in an avalanche which must have shaken the solid ground beneath. There was a farm-house just beyond, and Jessie and Ronald, as soon as their first surprise was over, began to feel serious apprehensions that it had been swept away in the rushing tide from the mountain. They accordingly sealed the immense pile of snow, which was as hard and compact as if it had been trodden down by the feet of an army, and hurried forward to ascertain the extent of the disaster. To their great relief, they found the house safe, but so near had the destructive avalanche come to it, that a shed attached to the barn was demolished and buried up, and a wagon standing in it was crushed to pieces. The family which occupied the house had not yet recovered from their alarm and excitement. At the time

the slide occurred, the mother and her two children were alone in the house. Hearing an unusual noise, which jarred the building like an earthquake, she ran to the door, and saw the whole hill-side apparently sliding down into the road. Comprehending her danger at a glance, she seized her little girl with one hand, and her babe with the other, and fled from the house with all possible speed—all of them bare-headed, and with only such garments as they wore indoors. Fortunately, she soon met her husband, who at first thought his wife had suddenly become crazy; but after hearing her story, he took the little girl into his arms, and they went back to the house. When Jessie and Ronald got there, the man was trying very earnestly to convince his wife that there was no further danger, but she kept glancing anxiously at the snow on the hill behind the house, as if momentarily expecting to see it commence its destructive march. There was, however, really little danger, now, for such was the form of the hill above the house, that a slide would not be likely to occur there, unless in connection with an avalanche on the more precipitous part of the mountain.

Jessie and Ronald now hurried home, thankful that an unseen Hand had held back the crashing snow-slip, while they were slowly passing along its track, unconscious of danger. So intently were their minds engaged with the fearful scene they had just witnessed, that Ronald did not notice, as he passed into the yard, that his snow-house was reduced to a shapeless heap, and its ruins scattered around in every direction.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REFEREE CASE.

“I WONDER where Henry is; I have n’t seen him for three or four days,” said Jessie one morning, as Ronald was mending one of the straps of his skates, preparatory to an excursion to the pond with several boys who were waiting outside.

No reply was made, and after a moment’s pause, she added,

“I am afraid he is sick. Have you seen him, lately, Ronald?”

“No, I have n’t seen him since that day we went over to Round Hill Pond, to see the ice-boat,” replied Ronald.

“You have n’t heard of the falling out of Ronald and Henry, have you?” inquired Oscar of Jessie, as soon as Ronald left the room.

"A falling out? No, I have heard nothing about that. What is the trouble between them?" inquired Jessie.

"I did n't know anything about it until yesterday," replied Oscar, "although I suspected something was wrong. It seems, according to Ronald's story, that he and Henry undertook to build a snow-house, and had got it nearly done, when Henry got mad about something or other, and knocked it all to pieees, while Ronald was away."

"But I can hardly believe that," said Jessie. "It does n't seem at all like Henry, to do such a thing as that—and such good friends as he and Ronald have always been, too. Did anybody see Henry tear the house down, or is it all mere suspicion?"

"It's nothing but suspicion, I believe," replied Oscar; "but Ronald says he's certain Henry did it, and he declares he will never have anything more to say to him. It's a little suspicious that Henry has n't been over here, since that day, is n't it?"

"Well, I shall not believe Henry did it, unless he acknowledges it, or some witness testifies that he saw him do it," added Jessie. "I will go over and see

Henry, to-day, and find out the truth about the matter."

In the afternoon, when her work was finished up, Jessie went over to Mr. Allen's, where Henry lived, and made inquiries about the report she had heard in the morning. Her brother readily admitted that he had destroyed the snow-house; but he justified himself on the ground, first, that Ronald did not treat him well, but provoked him to do it; and secondly, that he had a right to destroy it, as the snow-house was just as much his as it was Ronald's. Jessie listened patiently to all he had to say in his defence, and then simply inquired:—

"Why have n't you been over to see us, since that day?—you used to come almost every day."

Henry bit his thumb nail nervously, and gazed intently at the corner of the carriage-shed, but made no reply.

"Come, Henry, I want an answer to that question," added Jessie. "You know that you and I have no better friend, next to our mother, than Mrs. Page. Then all the rest of the family have always been very kind to us. Now I want to know why you should

shun them all, and your own sister, too, if you only did what your conscience approved, the last time you were over there. Will you answer me that?"

After a long pause, finding that Jessie was still patiently waiting for a reply, he stammered:—

"I don't know—I suppose I didn't do exactly right—but Ronald's more to blame than I am—he began to pick upon me, first."

"Well," added Jessie, "I want this quarrel settled right up, before it grows any worse. You acknowledge that you did wrong; now are you willing to confess this to the one you wronged, and to ask his pardon?"

"If he'd apologize to me first, perhaps I would," replied Henry, after a little hesitation.

"How much nobler it would be for you to go to him, first," replied Jessie. "According to your own showing, you are the one most to blame, even if Ronald did provoke you a little. Now I will engage, that if you go and acknowledge to him that you have done wrong, he will make ample apology to you for whatever provocation he may have given. Will you do it?"

"But I only did what I had a right to do—the snow-house was mine as much as it was his," said Henry, evading the question.

"I have some doubts about that," replied Jessie. "The snow-house was in Ronald's yard, and you were his guest. I think he had the best right to it. But even if you were equal partners in the matter, you had no right to destroy it without his consent. He has rights, as well as you. Two men sometimes build a house together; but if they should get into a dispute, when it was finished, and one of them should go and set the building afire, or pull it all to pieces, I think he would have to go to the State prison, even if he did own half the property. It would be a crime. And it is just the same in your case. At most you only owned half the snow-house, and you had no right to destroy even your own half, because it would interfere with Ronald's rights to do so."

Henry attempted no reply to this reasoning, but still manifested an unwillingness to make any advances towards a reconciliation. Jessie then tried to persuade him to go home with her, and have an interview with Ronald, she promising to do her best to arrange

matters to the satisfaction of both ; but Henry resolutely refused to do this.

“I have thought of one other way to settle this quarrel,” added Jessie, after a little pause ; “and that is, to refer it to two or three referees, and let them decide who is most to blame, and who shall make a first confession. Will you agree to that?” •

“I do n’t see any need of going to all that fuss about it—Ronald began the quarrel, and if he wants to make up, let him say so,” replied Henry.

“It is not considered a very good sign,” resumed Jessie, “when a man refuses to submit his dispute with a neighbor to two or three disinterested persons. People say he does not act in good faith. It looks as though he were neither innocent nor honest. Must I go home and tell the folks that you have done this?”

“No, I did n’t refuse, but I do n’t see any use in doing it, though,” answered Henry.

“Suppose Ronald insists that you are more to blame than he, and refuses to acknowledge his error until you have confessed yours ; how can you ever come to terms, unless by some such means as I have proposed? It is a very simple thing, and if you are both

acting in good faith, I don't see how you can object to it. Will you agree to it, if Ronald will?"

"Y-e-s," replied Henry, with evident reluctance.

"Well, you had better choose your referee now—that will save the necessity of seeing you again about it," added Jessie.

"I'il choose you," said Henry.

"Very well, I'll accept," replied Jessie. "Ronald shall choose another, and we two shall elect a third; then both parties shall have a hearing, and you agree to abide by the decision we make, without any question or grumbling, do you?"

"Why—but—"

"No whys or buts now, bub," interrupted Jessie, "the award of the referees is final—there's no appeal from it."

"Well, but suppose you referees should decide that Ronald should give me a thrashing; do you suppose I'd stand still and take it?" inquired Henry.

"That is not a supposable case," replied Jessie. "All I can say to it, is, that if the referees think the breach cannot be healed, and justice done to all, without some kind of reparation, or punishment, we shall

expect the guilty one to submit to it, whatever it is. But I must be going, now — you will probably hear from us to-morrow.”

Jessie had a private interview with Ronald, on her return home, and found that he was really much offended with Henry. He gave his version of the difficulty, dwelling particularly upon Henry's ungenerous fling at his parents, and the spite he exhibited in destroying the snow-house.

“But,” Jessie suggested, after patiently hearing his statement, “is n't it possible that you were the aggressor, after all? Were you not a little arbitrary, and self-willed, about that time? And did n't you provoke Henry by telling him you could order him out of the yard, if you chose, and by *daring* him to touch the snow-house, after you left it? You know Henry is older than you, and that made it harder to submit to such treatment. He feels that he did wrong, and I think he is sorry for it; but he says you began the quarrel, and are more to blame than he is. If you should go to him, and apologize for what you said, I am confident he would be melted into penitence in an instant, and make all the reparation possible for the wrong he has done you.”

Ronald was ready to admit that some of the blame should be placed to his account, but he did not think he was called upon to take the first step towards a reconciliation. Jessie then told him of the referee plan, and he cheerfully assented to it, and chose Marcus as his arbitrator.

It happened that Marcus heard nothing about the quarrel until Jessie apprised him of the honorable office to which he had been chosen. He approved of the course Jessie had taken, and accepted the appointment; and as a third referee was wanted, they selected Oscar for that post. Shortly after this, Mr. Allen rode by, and Marcus, hailing him, asked permission for Henry to come over for a little while in the evening, which he readily granted. So it was decided that the matter should be settled up at once.

Henry arrived early in the evening, before the referees had commenced their business, Jessie being engaged with her duties in the kitchen. He was ushered into the sitting-room, where several of the family were seated, including Ronald.

"Mr. Allen said you wanted me to come over here, this evening," he said to Marcus, with some embarrassment of manner, as he entered the room.

"Yes, walk in and take a seat—I'm glad to see you once more," replied Marcus.

"Good evening, Henry," said Ronald, very composedly, after the others had all saluted the newcomer.

"Good evening," Henry feebly responded, blushing a deeper red than before.

"Been skating, to-day?" inquired Ronald.

"No," replied Henry, in an almost inaudible tone, hitching uneasily in his seat.

"I have," continued Ronald, warming up. "Oh, you ought to have been there, and seen Gil Bryant skate. Did you ever see him?"

"No, I believe not," replied Henry, who was winking intently at the fire.

"Well, if he isn't a splendid skater, then I never saw one," continued Ronald. "Why, they say he has skated a mile in three minutes and a half; should n't you call that pretty quick travelling?"

Henry silently nodded assent—to the fire, and looked more "worked up" than ever.

"What, do n't you believe it, Marcus?" inquired Ronald, in a tone of surprise, as he noticed a broad smile illuminating Marcus's face.

"Believe it?" responded Marcus; "of course I do. I've skated about as fast as that myself, before now."

The fact was, Marcus was smiling at the thoughtless, good-natured talkativeness of Ronald, as contrasted with the timid and nervous reserve of Henry, and was balancing in his mind the question whether, after all, the services of the board of arbitrators would be necessary to bring the opposing parties to a reconciliation. That smile, however, seemed to have broken the spell that was upon Ronald. He dropped the thread of conversation, and was soon lost in his book, while Henry continued to sit winking at the glowing, coal-enveloped back-log. Aunt Fanny, who sat at the table sewing, now endeavored to draw him into conversation by inquiries after Mr. Allen's family, but did not meet with much better success than Ronald. Pretty soon Mrs. Page and Jessie came in, and Marcus inquired:

"Can we have the kitchen, now, mother?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Page.

"Well, Jessie and Oscar, suppose we withdraw," continued Marcus.

The three referees retired to the kitchen, and after

consulting a few moments, decided to examine the two parties to the dispute separately. Henry was then called in, and gave his version of the difficulty, from its beginning to his destruction of the snow-house. He defended himself, as well as he could, and promptly and frankly answered all the questions that were put to him by the referees. He was then requested to withdraw, and Ronald was called in, and underwent a similar examination. The latter seemed in quite a merry mood, when he returned to the sitting-room.

"Mother," he said, "you ought to go out there, and see what an august tribunal we've got. They're all as sober as judges, and Marcus has got a sheet of paper, and is scribbling away on it as fast as he can. He made believe that he was writing down all I said, but I guess I can talk faster than he can write, any day."

"He was only noting down the leading points of your testimony, I suppose," remarked Mrs. Page.

"Leading points?" continued Ronald; "he must have found them pretty thick, then, for he kept scribbling the whole time I was in the room. Did he when you was in there, Henry?"

"Yes," replied Henry, "he filled a whole page, and began another."

"Well," added Ronald, with an air of mock gravity, "I suppose the momentous question is almost decided. I tremble for my fate — do n't you, Henry?"

"Not much," replied Henry, with a smile.

"After all, I suppose we might as well be resigned," continued Ronald; "I'm not going to worry about it, any way."

"I do n't think it will be a very great hardship to either of you, to shake hands and become friends again, if that is all the referees ask," remarked Mrs. Page.

"Nor I, neither. Come, Henry, let's do it now, and get the start of them," cried Ronald; and grasping each other's hands, the two estranged playmates indulged in a long and hearty shake, and felt that their quarrel was at once healed.

"Well done, boys!" exclaimed Mrs. Page. "Now how much better that is, than to let such a trifling thing make enemies of you. I should n't wonder if you both remembered this act as long as you live; and you'll always remember it with pleasure, too."

"Do you suppose that's all they'll tell us to do — to shake hands and make up?" inquired Ronald.

"I have n't any idea what kind of a decision they will make, as I know but little about the facts in the case," replied Mrs. Page.

"It seems to me they are a good while making their decision," said Henry; "I should think it was about time to hear from them."

Oscar appeared at the door, a few minutes afterward, and summoned Ronald and Henry before the referees. Marcus requested them to stand, while he read the decision.

"May n't I say something, first?" inquired Ronald.

"Yes," replied Marcus.

"Well, Henry and I have made up," added Ronald.

"Ah, I'm glad to hear that," said Marcus. "If you had done this a little sooner, you might have saved yourselves and us some trouble; but as we have finished up the business you employed us to do, we shall expect you to abide by our decision, and to pay us our fees."

"Fees? Have we got to pay you fees?" inquired Ronald, with a laugh.

“To be sure you have,” replied Marcus, with the utmost gravity. “It is customary to pay the referees, in such cases.”

“Well, I don’t believe you’ll make much out of me—I can’t raise more than one cent apiece for you, any way,” said Ronald, feeling in his pocket.

“We wont discuss that point now, but I will read the decision,” observed Marcus; “and he proceeded to read the following paper:

“AWARD OF REFEREES.

“The Board of Referees in the case of Hapley *vs.* Page, have carefully considered the matter committed to their judgment, and have come to the following decision. They find that Page originated the trouble, by manifesting an overbearing and unaccommodating spirit towards Hapley; by claiming exclusive ownership of the snow-house erected by their joint labors; and by using taunting language. They also find that Hapley was to blame, for using unkind language towards Page, and especially for destroying the snow-house, in a spirit of retaliation. Supposing the structure in dispute to have been the joint property of Page and Hapley, the Referees are clearly of opinion that neither party had a right to pull down the whole

of it, or even one-half, without the consent of the other. Buildings, ships, etc., are often owned by several persons, jointly; but one party may not do any thing to the common property that would injure the other owners. The Referees, therefore, decide that Hapley, being the elder, ought to express to Page his regret for what has occurred in connection with this affair, and to ask his forgiveness; and that Page, in return, ought to make a similar acknowledgment to Hapley, asking his pardon for commeneing the quarrel. The Referees also recommend both parties cordially to forgive each other, and to manifest their determination to do so by shaking hands.

“The Referees further order, that at the earliest practicable day, the said Hapley and Page shall erect a new snow edifice, on the site of the one destroyed, to be called the *Temple of Peace*. Said struecture shall be of such size and proportions as the said Hapley and Page may agree upon, and when completed, it shall belong to the Referees, who shall accept the same as full payment for their services in this case.

“MARCUS PAGE,	} <i>Referees.</i>
“JESSIE HAPLEY,	
“OSCAR PRESTON,	

“*Highburg, March 4.*”

As soon as Marcus concluded the reading of this

paper, Henry stepped up to Ronald, and taking his hand, told him he was sorry for what he had done, and asked his forgiveness. Ronald responded in a similar spirit, and a cordial shaking of hands concluded the ceremonies. Marcus then thanked them for submitting so promptly and good-naturedly to the decision of the Referees, after which they all withdrew to the sitting-room.

"Jessie, have you finished your gallery of literary portraits?" inquired Marcus, as he drew his chair to its accustomed place at the table.

"Yes, I have done about all I shall do to it — I am getting a little sick of it," replied Jessie.

"Suppose you pass it around, then, for the entertainment of the company," said Marcus.

"I'm almost ashamed to show it," continued Jessie, going to a drawer in the secretary. "There are so many figures that I did not have time to take much pains with them. I think you'll be puzzled to tell what some of them represent."

"So much the better for that," replied Marcus.

Jessie had a taste for drawing, and had taken a few lessons in this art. Her interest in it had been re-

kindled, since removing to her new home, by the offer of Miss Lee to give her further instruction in the use of the pencil. Miss Lee was an accomplished sketcher and painter, and had formerly taught these branches in the academy, for several terms. The "gallery of literary portraits," alluded to by Marcus, was undertaken by Jessie to furnish amusement to the younger members of the family, rather than as an exercise in drawing. It consisted of a series of names of literary characters, enigmatically expressed. She handed the sheets to Marcus, who passed them round the circle. Some of the portraits were recognized by all at first sight; but others proved quite puzzling to the younger folks, and there were several which no one could solve, until Jessie gave a clue to them. On the next two pages we give a transcript of this GALLERY OF LITERARY PORTRAITS.



1. An Irish Poet.



2. A Philosopher.



3. A Religious Poet.



4. A Statesman.



5. An Essayist.



6. A Scottish Poet.



7. An English Poet.



8. An American Traveller.



9. Another Poet.



10. A Popular Poet.



11. An Eminent Divine.



12. A Celebrated Novelist.



13. A Philosopher.



14. A Popular Poet.



15. A Celebrated Orator.



16. A Great Poet.



17. A Novelist.



18. Another Poet.



19. An American Writer.



20. An English Poet.



21. An Astronomer.



22. A Celebrated Divine.



23. An American Poet.



24. An English Poet.

Key to the Gallery of Literary Portraits.

1. SWIFT.
2. LOCKE.
3. YOUNG.
4. FOX.
5. LAMB.
6. HOGG.
7. AKENSIDE.
8. KANE.
9. GAY.
10. COWPER.
11. PALEY.
12. COOPER.
13. BACON.
14. LONGFELLOW.
15. PITT.
16. SHAKSPEARE.
17. OPIE.
18. POPE.
19. SPARKS.
20. HOOD.
21. HERSCHEL.
22. HOOKER.
23. DRAKE.
24. CRABBE.

CHAPTER V.

A DAY AT SCHOOL.

EARLY the next Monday morning, a sleigh drove up to Mrs. Page's door, containing a large man wrapped in a shaggy bear-skin coat, a girl about fourteen years old, to whose cheeks the frosty morning air had lent a beautiful glow, and a boy whose age might have been between twelve and thirteen years. The girl and boy hurried into the house, and were warmly greeted by all the family. They were Katharine and Otis Sedgwick, and had boarded in the family for six months past, during which period they had attended the academy. They belonged in a town about ten miles distant. Their father, after hitching his horse in the shed, and throwing a blanket over him, came in to have a chat with the family, and to settle the "term bills" with Marcus. He stopped

about half an hour, and then set out for home ; after which the young folks began to prepare for school.

The academy building was about a mile distant from Mrs. Page's. In good weather, Marcus and the students in the family usually walked to and from school, taking their dinners with them. This first morning of the new term was a bright though cool one, and soon after half-past eight o'clock, the six "academicians," as Ronald called them, might have been seen wending their way through the snow-path, towards a little white belfry that gleamed over the tops of an evergreen forest in the distance.

At nine o'clock the bell rang, and as the students assembled in the hall, it was found that the attendance was quite large. The old scholars took their former seats, and desks were assigned to the new ones. Mr. Upton, the preceptor, then touched a little hand-bell — the signal for silence ; after which he took the Bible, and read from it a passage rich in instruction to the young — the fourth chapter of Proverbs. Every head was then bowed, as he offered up a simple and fervent prayer for the divine blessing upon the students and teachers there assembled.

After these exercises were concluded, Mr. Upton went to the large blackboard, facing the school, and wrote upon it this sentence, in characters that could be seen in the remotest part of the room :

“EXALT HER, AND SHE SHALL PROMOTE THEE.”

“‘Exalt *her*’ — can any one tell me what this refers to?” inquired Mr. Upton.

“Wisdom,” was the general answer from all parts of the room.

“Right,” replied Mr. Upton. “It is found in the chapter I have just read. Can any of you tell me what wisdom means, in this case?”

There were several answers to this question, such as “Religion,” “Prudence,” “Knowledge,” etc., but they were mostly given in a hesitating manner, and only a few of the scholars made any reply to the question.

“The word wisdom,” continued Mr. Upton, “has several significations. As used in the Bible, it sometimes means learning or knowledge ; and sometimes it means piety, or true religion. This last is the sense in which the word is used in the chapter I read to you.

You will notice that it is a favorite word with Solomon, if you read his Proverbs. But you will also observe that much that he says about this heavenly wisdom, may also apply with great propriety to human wisdom, or that knowledge with which we store our minds. This is true of the motto I have written on the blackboard. ‘Exalt her, and she shall promote thee.’ That is, if you desire promotion, give attention to the acquisition of knowledge — strive after the wisdom and skill which come from patient study, practice and observation — give the work of education a prominent place in your thoughts and plans. This, to be sure, is not the *highest* motive we have for faithfulness in study, but it is a strong one, and I think it may be useful to press it upon your attention, as we are entering upon a new term. This is the idea I wish to impress upon your minds, viz., that *knowledge brings promotion*. Vice, immorality, idleness, improvidence, or misfortune, sometimes interfere with this general law; but on the whole the rule holds good, that a man’s happiness, position, property and influence are promoted by knowledge. I feel safe, therefore, in assuring you that for every dollar

your education costs your parents, and for every hour of study, every act of self-denial, every effort and struggle it costs yourselves, you will be abundantly repaid hereafter. If you come here in a right spirit, you are putting your money, your time and your efforts into a safe bank. It will prove a capital investment to you, as long as you live.

“A gentleman at the South once employed a negro to kill a calf. When the animal was dressed and brought home, Cuffee, the butcher, demanded two dollars for the job. ‘Why, Cuffee! do you charge me two dollars for dressing a calf?’ exclaimed the gentleman. ‘No, massa, I charge one dollar for killin’ de calf, and one dollar for de *know how*,’ was Cuffee’s reply. Cuffee was right. A man has a perfect right to charge for the ‘know how.’ And generally men do charge for it, and get well paid, too.

“Suppose I am about to build a house. In the first place, I hire several common laborers to dig the cellar, and pay them one dollar per day. These are the most ignorant and unskilled laborers we have among us; that is, they have about as little ‘know how,’ as a man can get along with. Their tools are

few, and do not cost much, and so we may take the dollar per day they earn as the standard market value of a mere unskilled pair of hands and a set of strong muscles.

“After the cellar is dug, I set carpenters to work, employing them all by the day. By-and-by the head carpenter brings in his weekly or monthly bill. I find he charges me at the rate of one dollar a day for one hand. This is his apprentice, a young man of sixteen or seventeen, who has worked but a year or two at the trade. The ‘know how’ he has acquired makes him even now of as much value to me as a full grown man of the common laborer sort. Then there are several journeymen carpenters, for whose services I am charged one dollar and a half or three-quarters per day. These men have no more physical strength than the dollar-a-day laborers — perhaps not so much. Then why should they receive fifty or seventy-five per cent. more for their daily labor? A small fraction offsets the cost of their tools, and the balance is to pay them for their ‘know how.’ But the boss carpenter, who has a general oversight of the job, and of the other carpenters, charges perhaps two and a half

or three dollars per day for his time. He works no harder than the others, but he has more 'know how' than they, and is paid accordingly.

"So it is with the masons, painters, and all other workmen on my house — I must pay them in proportion to their 'know how.' And if I employ an architect, to make the drawings of the building, and he should charge me at the rate of five or ten dollars per day for the time he spent upon them, I should remember that his peculiar 'know how' cost more time, money and study than that of the carpenter or the mason, and therefore commands a higher price in the market.

"Thus you see one of the ways in which knowledge brings promotion. It has a market value, in dollars and cents. There are other ways in which it promotes a man. It saves him from errors and blunders. It increases his self-respect, and his means of enjoyment. It gives him a higher position in society. It endows him with greater influence among men. But I will not weary you by dwelling upon these ideas. You have come here avowedly to get wisdom, and I have held up to you one motive for persevering in the

work. I hope we shall all earnestly seek, and find, not only earthly but heavenly wisdom, so that at last we may receive that 'crown of glory' which is promised, in the chapter that has been read, to those who get wisdom and understanding."

Mr. Upton, aided by Marcus, then proceeded to arrange the classes, and perfect the organization of the school. Jessie was very glad to learn that her plan of paying for her own tuition by rendering occasional assistance, in the way of hearing the recitations of the lower classes, had been acceded to by the trustees. There was to her a double gratification in this; since she would not only earn her own tuition bills, but would all the while be gaining experience in the profession to which she was looking forward with so much interest. After breaking to her this pleasant intelligence, Mr. Upton added, in tones audible to those who sat near her:—

"I have been telling the scholars that 'knowledge brings promotion'—now I am going to illustrate it by promoting you to the first monitorial desk. You will please to remove your books to that desk, as I want this one for another young lady."

There were several monitorial desks in the hall, which were slightly elevated above the others, and so placed as to overlook them. They were usually assigned to the oldest and most trustworthy pupils, and were regarded as posts of honor. The one to which Jessie was transferred was near the teachers' desks, and was the principal monitorial desk on the girls' side of the room. With a modest blush she gathered up her books and took possession of her new dignity; but it was a long time before she could muster courage to look up, and meet the battery of as yet idle eyes that were directed towards her.

The organization of the school occupied most of the forenoon. At twelve o'clock the morning session closed, and the scholars were released for an hour and a half. About a score of them, who lived at a distance, remained, and either singly, or in little scattered groups, were for a time very busy over the contents of sundry small baskets and tin pails. The boys quickly found the bottoms of *their* dinner receptacles, and impatiently sallied forth, with a half-eaten apple, dough-nut or slice of bread in one hand, and a sled or pair of skates in the other.

"Good riddance to you!" cried one of the girls, as the last boy-muncher — one of the slow sort — closed the door.

"Look here, now! I'm not gone, yet," replied the boy, opening the door.

"Well, you'd better go, — and tell your mother not to put you up so much dinner to-morrow, will you?" responded the girl.

"There, now, I'd come right back, and stay all the noon with you, only I don't want to humor you so much," replied the boy, who was as "slow to anger" as he was slow in eating — and none too slow in either case, after all, I suspect.

"O *do* come — we should be *so* delighted with your company," retorted the girl; but the tramp, tramp, tramp of a stout pair of boots down the stairs was all the reply she got.

And now the girls seemed determined to have a good time among themselves. The little groups gradually enlarged, the tongues wagged in a more lively manner, and sundry choice tit-bits were transferred from one basket to another. There were two or three "new girls," however, who did not venture into any

of the social circles, but demurely sat at their own desks. Jessie was a favorite in the school, and quite a number of the girls gathered around her, among whom was Abby Leonard, who sometimes stayed at noon, by way of change, although her boarding-place was not far off. Abby, notwithstanding the foolish speech she made about associating with such poor girls as Jessie, a few months before this, was far from shunning the company of that young lady. On the contrary, she seemed to court it.

“Have a pickle, Jessie?” inquired Abby, holding out a good-sized cucumber.

“No, I thank you, I seldom eat pickles,” replied Jessie.

“You don’t? — why, I’ve eaten six as big as that, this noon,” replied Abby. “I had to ‘hook’ them, though, for Mrs. Miles would fidget herself to death if she knew how fast her pickles are going off. I love sour things, dearly. When I was at home, I used to eat a dozen pickled limes a day, sometimes. We always keep them in the house — father buys them by the barrel. I think it’s real mean, that they don’t keep them for sale here.”

"I should n't think it could be very wholesome to eat so much of such things — they are very indigestible," remarked Jessie.

"O, they never hurt me — I eat everything I want, and think nothing about it," replied Abby.

Abby then prevailed upon Jessie to accept a piece of her cake, but immediately added:—

"I declare, it's so mean I'm almost ashamed to offer it to you. At home, we should n't think it was hardly fit to set before the servants. Mother never allows our cook to make anything plainer than nice pound cake."

"I call that very good cake — good enough for anybody," said Jessie, utterly indifferent to "our cook" and her "nice pound cake."

"Just look at that squint-eyed girl — did you ever see such a fright?" continued Abby, in a whisper, alluding to one of the new scholars, who sat in her seat, alone, apparently listening with a good degree of astonishment to Abby's remarks.

"Poor girl, she feels lonesome — some of us ought to go and speak to her," said Jessie.

Abby now left the room, whereupon the girls in

Jessie's neighborhood began to make merry at her expense.

"My mother does n't allow the cook to make anything meaner than brown bread, and we have that on the table three times a day," said one girl.

"When I'm at home, I eat six pints of pea-nuts a day — father buys them by the ton," said another.

"Speaking of pickles — do you know what she eats them for?" inquired another girl. "I can tell you — she thinks they make her look pale and genteel. She eats chalk, and slate pencils, too — I've seen her do it, many a time."

"Yes," added Kate Sedgwick, who was one of the group, "and you ought to see her drink vinegar, too. Why, she makes nothing of drinking a whole cup full of clear vinegar at one draught."

"I do think she is the most hateful thing" —

"Come, girls, this is scandal," interposed Jessie, "let us talk about something else."

"Scandal? — no, this is nothing but the truth, and telling the truth is n't scandal," replied Kate.

"I think it is, very often," replied Jessie.

"Well, I do n't call telling the truth talking scandal,

and I never heard anybody say it was, before," remarked another girl, one of the largest in the school. "If a girl really eats chalk and slate pencils, and drinks vinegar, to make herself look genteel, it is n't scandal to tell of it."

The other girls in the group all took the same ground, and Jessie was at least half convinced she was in the wrong. She made no attempt to argue the point, but sought to give the matter a practical turn, by saying:—

"Well, I never hear a lot of girls talking about another one behind her back, without having a suspicion that I shall be served the same way, as soon as I am out of hearing. Abby was here a few moments ago, and we were all on good terms with her, and she spoke kindly to us. But every tongue is against her, as soon as her back is turned. It seems to me there is something inconsistent and unkind in this. If we had any criticisms to make on what she said, would it not have been better to have made them to her face?"

"Why, Jessie!" exclaimed Kate, "you are not in earnest, are you? Only think what an explosion

there would be, if we should tell her just what we think of her. Everybody dislikes that girl, and I don't believe you think any better of her than the rest of us do. I don't see why you should stand up for her so, all at once — she does n't deserve it."

"I have n't 'stood up' for her more than I would for any of you, under the same circumstances," replied Jessie. "I only proposed that we talk something beside scandal. Now, I'm going to have a run out doors — but first I must speak to Lucy Grant — nobody has spoken to her to-day, hardly, and the poor child feels bad — I can see it in her looks."

Lucy was the "squint-eyed girl" who had attracted Abby's notice a few minutes before. She was afflicted with that defect of the eye commonly called squinting, but the proper name of which is *strabism*, or *strabismus*. In her case, the difficulty originated in a severe fit of sickness which she experienced when she was about five years old, and which was attended by a great deal of nervous irritation. There are muscles on each side of the eye-ball, by which it is moved from side to side. Squinting is caused by one of these muscles (usually the inner one) contracting, or grow-

ing short, while the one on the other side of the ball is lengthened in the same proportion. Sometimes the defect is very slight, but in the case of Lucy the deformity was quite prominent, and it began to cause her much mortification, for she was just entering upon her teens. Within a few months she had thought seriously of submitting to a surgical operation—for strabismus is sometimes removed by cutting through the contracted muscle of the eye-ball; but the uncertainty of the operation, and the dread of the pain, were too much for her weak courage to overcome.

Lucy belonged in Highburg, and was more or less known to most of the scholars. Though she did not hear Abby Leonard's allusion to her, she saw enough to satisfy her what the purport of the remark was; and this, together with the little notice the other girls took of her, exaggerated by a somewhat suspicious disposition, had depressed her into a not very enviable frame of mind. A few kind words, however, will often dispel the blackest cloud; and it was Jessie's privilege to wield this potent power in behalf of Lucy. Greeting her with the cordial air of an old friend, and forgetting the disparity in their ages, Jessie chatted

freely with her about several matters of common interest, for a few minutes, and then added:--

"Come, Lucy, let's go out and see what is going on. You mustn't get into the habit of sitting here all the noon-time—Mr. Upton tells us we must always go out and take the fresh air."

Lucy went out with Jessie, and, after mingling in the society and the sports of the other girls for an hour, returned to her seat at the ringing of the bell, with a very different opinion of her school-mates from that which she entertained an hour before.

The afternoon session passed off quite pleasantly. When the hour to close arrived, Mr. Upton gave out a hymn to be sung, as was his custom. Before giving the signal to commence singing, he remarked:—

"My young friends, I think we have made a very good beginning to-day. Everything has gone favorably with us, and I feel much indebted to you all for coöperating with me so willingly, in organizing the school. I augur from this day's work a pleasant and prosperous term. We seem all to be in harmony, and I trust we shall continue so to the end. In referring to this text this morning," continued the preceptor, point-

ing to the motto on the black-board, "I made a somewhat strong appeal to your ambition. I endeavored to show that pecuniary and other advantages would be your reward, for faithfulness to your studies. If any of you suppose that this is the highest and noblest motive for study, our evening hymn will, I hope, correct the error."

The scholars then united in singing the following beautiful hymn, by "holy George Herbert:—"

"Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for Thee;—

"To scorn the senses' sway,
While still to Thee I tend;
In all I do, be Thou the way, —
In all, be Thou the end.

"All may of Thee partake:
Nothing so small can be,
But draws, when acted for Thy sake,
Greatness and worth from Thee.

"If done beneath Thy laws,
E'en servile labors shine;
Hallowed is toil, if this the cause, —
The meanest work divine."

CHAPTER VI.

SWEETS AND BITTERS.

AMONG the sources of amusement and instruction enjoyed by Mrs. Page's family, was a weekly newspaper. I do not mean one of those folio medleys of literature, news and advertisements, whose weekly visits one or two dollars per annum will insure to all who desire them — though this useful class of publications was fully appreciated in the family; but *the* newspaper *par excellence* was quite another affair. Its title was "THE HOME WREATH;" the publishers were "Page & Co.;" the terms were "gratis;" the publication day was Saturday. It was usually composed of one, two or three sheets of letter paper, according to the lack or press of matter supplied. All the members of the family were regular contributors, and Aunt Fanny was the editress. The contents con-

sisted of original articles, and short selections cut from other newspapers. All original articles were written on one side of narrow strips of paper, of uniform size, so that they could be neatly pasted into the columns — for the “Wreath” was not printed, and only one copy was issued. There was a letter-box in the entry, in which all contributions were dropped, and through which private communications were exchanged between members of the family. Before the newspaper was established, the family had resolved itself into a “Letter-Writing Society,” each member of which was bound by the by-laws to write at least one letter or note per week to some other member. This proved for a while a pleasant and profitable arrangement; but the newspaper enterprise had now nearly superseded it.

Jessie’s conversation with some of her school-mates on scandal, mentioned in the last chapter, led her thoughts to that subject, afterward; and the longer she reflected on it, the more confirmed was she in the belief that she had taken the right ground in the dispute. Still, she did not know how to silence objections, and prove that she was right, and her investiga-

tions did not aid her much. She looked into Webster's large Dictionary, and found that one definition of scandal was "something uttered which is *false* and injurious to reputation." This rather bore against her; but the other definitions, "reproachful aspersion," "opprobrious censure," and "defamatory speech or report," seemed to favor her side of the question, as they did not distinctly recognize falsity as an ingredient of scandal. The matter was by no means clear to her mind, however, and as she felt the need of further light, she wrote the following communication for the "Wreath," and dropped it in the letter-box, in the evening:

"MISS EDITOR:—Several of the scholars of the academy had a little dispute, to-day, on the question whether a person is guilty of scandal who merely tells the *truth* about another. I took the ground that to circulate evil reports about a person, even if they were true, was scandal; but the others all disagreed with me. Please inform me, through the columns of the 'Wreath,' whether I am right or wrong; and if I am right, have the kindness to tell me how I can prove it.

"INQUIRER."

Several days passed, and it was now the middle of the week. Nothing had been seen of Henry since the Friday evening previous, when the referee case was decided, and Jessie began to feel uneasy about his absence. It was expected that he would come over on Saturday afternoon, and help build the "Temple of Peace." It was now too late to do this, a warm rain and thaw having carried off most of the snow. On Wednesday afternoon Ronald and Otis were going in search of the truant, that being one of the regular half-holidays of the week in all the schools; but before they were ready to start, Henry made his appearance.

"Well, you're a pretty fellow!" cried Ronald, as soon as Henry hove in sight. "So you've come over to help me build that snow temple, now the snow has all gone."

"Can't we scrape up enough in the garden to do it, now? — let's go and see," replied Henry.

The boys went to the rear of the house, and found some depth of snow yet remaining under the shadow of the buildings and fences. But it was too hard and icy to answer their purpose, even had there been

enough of it. Henry seemed to be quite disappointed, and exclaimed, with considerable warmth :—

“It’s too bad ! But there, I knew it would be just so. I could have come over Saturday afternoon just as well as not, but Mrs. Allen would n’t let me. She never lets me go anywhere, when I want to.”

“Never mind,” said Ronald, “it’s likely we shall have plenty of snow yet, and we’ll build the temple when it does come.”

“I don’t know about that,” replied Henry, shaking his head. “Besides, I wanted to build the temple right away—it spoils all the fun, waiting so long. I wish I *had* come over here Saturday afternoon, in spite of her.”

“How did you happen to get away this afternoon?” inquired Otis.

“I asked Mr. Allen to let me come, this morning, and he said I might. She tried to keep me at home, as it was ; but I got the start of her, this time. Mr. Allen is a real good man—I like him first rate ; but I can’t bear his wife—she’s just as cross as she can be to me.”

Henry remained with his friends most of the after-

noon, and spoke rather freely of his mistress, in the presence of other members of the family. Jessie was much pained by these remarks, and before her brother returned home, she had a private interview with him, and cautioned him against speaking so disrespectfully of Mrs. Allen. After a few moments' conference, however, she was more inclined to pity than to censure the boy. The resentful feeling he had manifested in the presence of others, melted into grief, as he opened his heart to his sister, and poured into her ear the story of his sorrows. The poor fellow was still the victim of homesickness, and not without good reasons, it seemed. He had found a father, in Mr. Allen, who treated him with parental kindness and indulgence, but he wanted a mother. He was persuaded that Mrs. Allen had no affection for him. He thought she actually disliked him. She manifested no motherly interest in his welfare—she evidently felt little sympathy for him. She never praised, commended or encouraged him, but spoke to him only to give orders and find fault. She actually seemed to take pleasure in thwarting his plans and wishes, and interfering with his enjoyment.

Such was Henry's opinion of Mrs. Allen. It may have been unjust to her, but he evidently was persuaded in his heart that the woman disliked him, and he felt unhappy in consequence, and hinted of running away. As an illustration of his trials, he said that whenever he finished up his work, and wanted to go anywhere, Mrs. Allen would set him to braiding husk mats, just to keep him busy, although "she had mats enough to last her fifty years," he added, rather indignantly. It was mat-braiding that prevented his coming over to build the snow temple at the appointed time, and he could not refer to his severe disappointment, even now, without some petulance.

"Well," said Jessie, after listening patiently to this outpouring of complaint, "I am very sorry to hear this. I thought you had got a good home, and were happy. But I cannot believe that Mrs. Allen is as bad as you represent. There must be some mistake about this. She appears to be a good, kind-hearted woman, and she speaks of you as though she felt an interest in you. I can't think that she dislikes you, unless you have given her cause. Are you careful to try to please her?"

"Why, yes, I do everything she tells me to do," replied Henry.

"That may be," continued Jessie, "and yet you may not try to please her. Do you remember the anecdote about the little girl who was asked why everybody loved her? 'I don't know,' she said, 'unless it's because I love everybody.' Now is n't it possible that you think Mrs. Allen does n't love you, because you do n't love her?"

"I know I don't love her—but it's because I can't," replied Henry.

"Suppose, now," resumed Jessie, "you go home with the determination of making her love you. Try to please her in everything. Do everything cheerfully, and do it just right. Anticipate her wishes. Don't let her see any scowls, or impatient looks, or hear any fretting. Try to feel grateful and affectionate towards her, and think as well of her as you can. Come, Henry, will you do this?"

"It's of no use to try that," replied Henry. "You wouldn't talk so, if you knew her as well as I do. I don't like her, and I can't."

"Then do it for Mr. Allen's sake," continued Jes-

sie, "if you cannot for hers. He treats you kindly, and you like him, and I suppose you would be glad to show your gratitude to him. But what would he think of you, if he knew how you feel towards his wife, and how you speak of her? For his sake, if for no other reason, you ought to try to get along pleasantly with her. But in any event, I beg of you never to say another word about running away, unless you want to *wholly* break mother's heart. Sam ran away from home, and you know the consequences of it. You and I are all that mother has left now, and if we ——" but emotion checked her utterance, and she gave way to her tears.

Henry seemed somewhat affected by the advice and entreaties of his sister, and before he left her, he promised to do his best to please Mrs. Allen, for one week, and to refrain, during that period, from saying anything evil of her, and from cherishing any unkind feelings towards her, whatever provocation she might give him. At the end of that time, or as soon after as convenient, he was to report the result to Jessie.

The "sugar season" had now commenced. The rock or sugar maple is a common tree, in Vermont,

and every spring the farmers make large quantities of sugar from its sap. The sap, when it begins to ascend, and before the foliage has put forth, is very rich in sugar. The time when this takes place varies from February to May, according to the season. It was now the second week in March, and the sap had begun to run freely. Mrs. Page did not own a "sugar plantation," as a maple forest is called; but there were several large maple trees on her land, near the house, which Marcus had always been accustomed to tap, in the spring, for his own amusement. The process of sugar-making was familiar to all the family except Oscar, who had resided in Highburg only since the previous autumn, and had never witnessed the operation. As Ronald hinted pretty broadly that he was quite willing to undertake the responsibility of extracting from the aforesaid half dozen trees their yearly rental of molasses and sugar, Marcus, remembering the pleasure he derived from the same occupation when a boy, gave up the business into the hands that coveted it.

Ronald commenced his sugar operations early the next morning. With a small auger he bored several

holes in each tree, two or three inches deep, and inclining upwards. These holes were about eighteen or twenty inches from the ground, and on the south side of the tree. Into each hole he drove a spile, which consisted of a picce of sumac, elder, or sassafras, with the pith bored out, and one end sharpened. The sap flowed through these spiles into the tubs or buckets placed to receive it. When Ronald came home from school, in the afternoon, he found he had collected several gallons of the sweet liquid, which he and the other boys removed to the house. A large iron kettle was filled with the sap, and placed over the fire. We are so accustomed to speak of "making" sugar, that it is possible the word sometimes misleads us. We cannot make sugar. The cane, the maple, the beet, and other plants, are our sugar factories, but they give us their saccharine treasures greatly diluted in water. We boil this water away, or evaporate it, and the solid sugar remains—and that is the way we "make" sugar. As fast as the water evaporated in Ronald's kettle, new sap was added, so that the mass did not thicken much that evening.

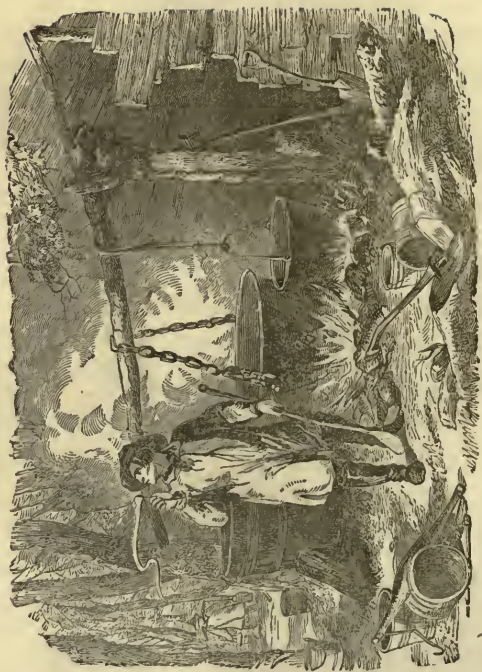
The next morning, Ronald again emptied his buck-

ets, which were partly filled. The kettle was kept over the fire, through the day, the sap being turned in as fast as room was made for it by evaporation. In the afternoon, when the liquid had thickened to a syrup, Mrs. Page removed it from the fire, and strained it through woollen, and then suffered it to cool and settle. In the evening, the boiling was resumed, under Ronald's direction, the white of an egg and a little milk being thrown into the kettle, to clarify the compound. The scum was carefully removed as it rose to the surface, and then the syrup was boiled with a gentle fire until it began to grain. All hands were now called into the kitchen, and the poetry of sugar-making commenced in earnest. Some of the children had provided themselves with pieces of ice hollowed out upon the upper surface, like saucers, into which a ladle full of the delicious liquid was dropped, when it immediately assumed the consistency of wax. Others dipped snow-balls into the "liquid sweetness," or dropped the syrup into cold water, in which it assumed the waxy form; while the older ones were content to eat their "maple honey" out of plain saucers. The syrup was by this time hard

enough to be taken off the fire. And now it had to be stirred vigorously until it was cool enough to cake, when it was dipped into little round fluted moulds. The grain now quickly hardened, the molasses drained off, and the boys had a good supply of prime maple sugar the next morning.

The next morning was Saturday, and as the day was fine, and the maple sugar fever was now fully developed, when Oscar proposed a visit in the afternoon to a "sugar camp" about a mile distant, there was a general response in favor of the suggestion, among the young folks, and Marcus promised to go with them. When the party were about starting, after dinner, it was found that Jessie was not among them. Her brother Henry, too, whom Ronald had seen, on his way home from school, and invited, did not make his appearance — a circumstance ominously suggestive of "husk mats" to Jessie's mind. Perhaps it was partly this fact, and not entirely her sense of duty to the family, that led her to insist on remaining at home and doing her part of the Saturday afternoon's work, although Marcus and Mrs. Page both urged her to join the party. She had her reward,





however, in an approving conscience, whichever may have been the motive of the act of self-denial.

The "sugar camp" which the young people visited that afternoon, belonged to one of their neighbors, who had about a hundred and fifty maple trees. They found the man and one of his sons engaged in collecting and boiling down the sap. The kettles were suspended by chains and hooks attached to a stout pole, which was supported by two crotched posts. There was a lively fire under the kettles, which was often replenished by wood that had been seasoned and split. During the boiling process, it is necessary to have some one on the ground night and day, and so they eat and sleep in the camp, and there is no rest until the work is done. A rude shed was erected, opposite the fire, for their protection. The side towards the fire was open, for the sake of the warmth, and for convenience in watching the boiling. The floor was thickly carpeted with straw, and here the men sometimes took a nap when weary. One of the men in the engraving is represented as bringing sap, and the other is blowing the candy or wax, to ascertain how far the boiling has advanced.

Marcus and his companions passed an hour or two very pleasantly in the camp, chatting with the men, watching their operations, and occasionally taking a sip of the delicious syrup. Meanwhile Jessie, by virtue of their absence, got the first reading of the "Home Wreath," which made its appearance in the afternoon. Under the editorial head, she found the inquiry she had sent to the editress, appended to which was the following reply :

"Our correspondent is right. To circulate evil reports about another, without a good object in view, is wrong, even if the reports be true. Those who do this from a habit of tattling, or to gratify an idle curiosity, or from envy or malice, or from no cause whatever, are guilty of scandal. We have no right to publish the evil deeds of others, unless there is a prospect that we can accomplish good by doing so. There are several ways in which our correspondent can prove this to the satisfaction of her young friends, if they possess ordinary candor.

"1st. She can prove it from the Bible, by such passages as these : 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people.'* 'Be not a witness

* Lev. 19 : 16.

against thy neighbor without cause.* ‘Judge not, that ye be not judged.’† ‘Speak evil of no man.’‡ There are many other passages, enjoining the same duty.

“2d. She can prove it from writers on moral science, who generally teach that it is wrong to utter injurious truth concerning others, except in certain specified cases, where the ends of justice require it.

“3d. She can prove it by an argument drawn from analogy, thus:—Every person possesses a reputation, which is the estimation in which he is held by the community. This is a priceless possession, and the greatest harm we can do to another, next to corrupting his moral character, is to injure his reputation. This is what scandal does, and it is this that makes it wrong. When we expose another’s faults, without adequate cause, we virtually declare that he has more estimation than he deserves, and we proceed to strip him of a portion of it. If this is right, then when we find a dishonest man, who has more property than really belongs to him, it would be right for us to rob him of a part of it. Nobody would justify the latter case, and the other must be settled on the same principles.

“The exceptions to this rule are few and simple.

* Prov. 24: 28.

† Matt. 7: 1.

‡ Tit. 3: 2.

When the ends of justice, the protection of the innocent, or the good of the offender, demand the exposure of a transgressor, we are bound to tell what we know of his guilt, to those whose duty it is to call him to account, or who may be exposed to danger from him.

“We are glad our friend has called our attention to this subject. Evil-speaking is a sadly prevalent sin, in our community. Some wise man once said, that ‘if all persons knew what they said of each other, there would not be four friends in the world.’ We are afraid there are many people in our town who would think themselves suddenly deserted by every friend they ever had, if all the scandal and gossip in circulation should be borne to their ears. Let us set our faces against this mean and debasing sin.”

Miss Lee, while alluding to the facility with which scandal was circulated in that community, might have pointed to a striking exception, had it been proper. There was in that town a youth who had run a wild and reckless course, bringing sorrow and shame to his parents, and retribution to himself. He had twice been put into prison on a charge of crime, and had finally been tried and sentenced for larceny. There were three persons in the town who knew these facts

in his history, and only three. So inviolably had they kept the secret, that no one else, not even the members of their own family, suspected that the young man had ever departed from the path of rectitude. That youth was Oscar Preston; and the three friends who had so jealously guarded his reputation in Highburg from injuries which seemed almost inevitable, were Mrs. Page, Miss Lee, and Marcus. They were induced to receive him into their home, because he expressed a sincere desire to reform; and to encourage him in his good purposes, they had carefully refrained from all allusion to his past errors. Oscar at one time feared that the secret had been divulged, by one of his old city comrades who passed through the town with a circus company; but so far as he could ascertain, his apprehensions were unfounded. He had now lived about six months in Highburg, and had proved himself worthy of the kindness which had been shown to him by his aunts and cousin.*

* The early career of Oscar is related at length in the first two volumes of this series, "Oscar," and "Clinton."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW TO BE HAPPY.

WHEN Henry Hapley left his sister, after making the promise mentioned in the last chapter, he came to the conclusion, upon a few moments' reflection, that he had been coaxed into doing a foolish thing. The idea of loving Mrs. Allen seemed absurd; and as to pleasing her, he did not believe he could do it, if he should try as hard as possible. However, as he had made the promise, he finally concluded that he must try to keep it, at least for the week to which it was limited.

Jessie, in her conversation with her brother, had come very near to the true origin of Henry's troubles, though she knew but little of the facts in the case. The truth was, he did *not* try to please his mistress, and it was mainly owing to this that he had become

so unhappy. Mrs. Allen, like most other people, had her peculiarities. One of the most prominent of these was her extreme neatness. She carried this excellent virtue to excess. A grain of sand in the eye could hardly be more painful to her than was a grain of dirt on her floors. Everything about the premises that would bear contact with soap and water, had to undergo its regular ablution, even to the outside of the house. Her husband, sometimes, while witnessing the terrible scrubblings which were of almost daily occurrence, used pleasantly to remind her, by way of warning, of the good Dutch woman who scoured her floor until she tumbled through into the cellar. But her motto was, that "nothing is clean that can be made cleaner;" and so she patiently scrubbed on, in spite of the warning, wherever there was dirt, or even a "might, could, would or should have been," upon which to hang a suspicion.

Now there can be no doubt that a boy thirteen years old is capable of bringing a vast deal of dirt into a house. So Mrs. Allen discovered, to her dismay, before Henry had been an inmate of her dwelling twelve hours. Not that he was unusually dirty or

careless in his habits, for he was as neat as boys will average; but he had never been trained to that rigid observance of the laws of cleanliness which was the rule in Mrs. Allen's family. He could scarcely stir an inch in the house, no matter how silently or secretly, but Mrs. Allen, with her keen sight, could track his every step. There would always be snow, ice, water or mud from his boots, hay-seed from his clothing, crumbs and litter from his pockets, or something else, to tell that he had been there, and call for the broom.

Mrs. Allen began at once to combat this alarming evil—at first kindly and hopefully, then despondingly, and then chidingly. Henry thought she made unnecessary trouble about a small matter, and soon began to feel provoked by the measures she deemed necessary to insure greater neatness on his part. Frequently hearing Mr. Allen good-naturedly rally his wife for being so over-nice, Henry soon came to think he had a right to set himself in opposition to this peculiarity of her character. So, after a few weeks, he grew more careless than at first, in regard to making dirt; and, when irritated by the scoldings that were sure to follow, he sometimes even took a sort of malicious satisfaction in the mischief he had done.

Mrs. Allen was really a kind-hearted woman, though everybody did not find it out at first sight. She readily assented to Mr. Allen's proposal to give Henry a home, and she felt much sympathy for the boy on account of the misfortunes that had overtaken his family. But now her feelings towards him began to change. Henry little imagined that he was closing the door to her heart, and locking himself out; but this he was doing. Mrs. Allen could not help noticing that he took little or no pains to please her, and she soon came to feel that it was of little consequence whether she consulted his wishes and happiness, in her arrangements. So the unhappy antagonism between them grew from day to day.

When Henry reached his home, after his interview with Jessie, he found Mrs. Allen in a rather unamiable mood. She said nothing, but her looks indicated anything but peace within. She was getting supper. Henry usually "set the table," and assisted in other ways in getting the meals, and clearing away after them; but the table was already spread, and seeing no chance to render assistance, he inquired, after sitting a few moments:—

“Is there anything I can do?”

“You can eat your supper, I suppose,” replied Mrs. Allen; “you’re always sure to be on hand for that. The work is of no consequence—I can do it all—yours and my own too. You have n’t brought a stick of wood into the house to-day—I’ve had to go out twice after some, this afternoon.”

“Oh, there! I forgot all about the wood—that’s too bad,” exclaimed Henry, with a feeling of real regret at his own heedlessness; and he started to get an armful of wood, but was called back by Mrs. Allen, who told him it was not wanted now.

“You went off, as usual,” continued Mrs. Allen, “leaving your coat on a chair, and your old muddy boots right in the passage-way, for everybody to tumble over. I think it is very strange that you should have to change your clothes every time you go out to play. Who do you think can afford to clothe you, if you put on your best clothes whenever you get a chance?”

“I have n’t been playing, this afternoon—I went over to see my sister,” replied Henry.

"There was no need of changing your clothes, to go there," continued Mrs. Allen.

"Well, I wont do so again, if you don't want me to," replied Henry.

This answer, though made in a respectful tone, surprised Mrs. Allen so much, that she looked at the boy a moment, as if in doubt whether he could be in earnest.

"I do n't see how I could have forgotten about the wood," continued Henry. "I thought of it as I was coming home from school; and I started out to get it, almost the first thing after I got home; but just then I heard the cows making a racket in the barn, and I went to see what the matter was, and I never thought of the wood again. After this I mean to keep enough in the back-room all the time to last two or three days; then if I should happen to forget it, once in a while, you wont get out."

Henry had usually received the reprimands of Mrs. Allen in sullen silence, and no wonder she was surprised at the spirit manifested in this reply. But her husband came in, tea time had arrived, and the subject was dropped.

Henry was at this time attending school, as Mr. Allen had little for him to do. He was to have from four to six months' schooling a year, and to devote the rest of his time to work. This was the agreement made with Mrs. Hapley. Of course, while attending school, Henry could have but few play hours, unless he encroached upon time that should have been devoted to work, which he was sometimes tempted to do. The next day, however, after the conversation just reported, he was careful to do his work up thoroughly, although it left him no time for sport. He had the kitchen fire started in the morning before any one else was up — a feat almost without a precedent. Instead of cutting a scanty mess of hay for the day, as usual, he cut enough to last two days. The wood-box in the house was heaped full in the morning, and again replenished at night. And so with all his other work. The yard and roads were very muddy, but Mrs. Allen searched in vain for his tracks on her clean floors, and as she did so, "wondered what was going to happen."

Thus matters went on for several days. No one appeared to notice that Henry was not doing just as

he had done for several weeks. He got no commendation or encouragement, either by words or looks. He was a little disappointed that his efforts to please were not noticed; but then it was some satisfaction that no fault had been found with him, since he began to reform. Even when, while wiping the supper dishes one evening, he had the ill luck to drop a saucer, which flew into fragments, Mrs. Allen did not scold him, but simply remarked that it was fortunate it was an odd one. He also found a good deal of satisfaction in the consciousness that he was trying to do right. He felt on better terms with himself and every one else, than he did a few days before. His moping, homesick feelings were fast disappearing.

When Henry came home from school on Saturday, he mentioned to Mrs. Allen that he had been invited to go over to the sugar-camp with his sister and others. As he had been away one afternoon, that week, he did not like to ask for another half day; but he hoped permission would be given him to go, without his request, and he finished up his work as quickly as possible, that he might be ready to start the moment the word was spoken. But when these things were

attended to, Mrs. Allen had other jobs for him to do, which he cheerfully performed ; and when these were finished, knowing it was too late to join the excursion party, he actually went to braiding husks of his own accord, and so filled up the remainder of the afternoon.

“ Why, Henry ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Allen, as she went into the barn towards sunset, and found the boy at work, “ I thought you had gone off to play. You need n’t have done this, to-day.”

“ I thought I would be getting the husks out of the way, they have been lying around so long,” replied Henry.

“ Well, I think you have got enough braided — you can use the rest for litter,” said Mrs. Allen.

Henry was delighted to hear this, for he was heartily sick of braiding husks. The bin was quickly emptied of its contents, and before the barn was shut up for the night, the two horses were standing knee deep in clean, sweet corn husks.

Henry faithfully kept his promise to Jessie, through the week agreed upon, which ended the next Wednesday afternoon. He expected to have an opportunity

to see Jessie, at least for a few moments, that afternoon, and to tell her of his success ; but after dinner, Mr. Allen and his wife went away, to be gone until night, leaving the house and their little boy in charge of Henry. So his plans were again frustrated. He did not manifest any ill-humor, however, although for a moment he was inclined to. Willie, Mr. Allen's only child, was about six years old. He had the hooping-cough, at this time ; and as the day was very windy and blustering, his mother wished him to stay in the house during her absence. Instead of fretting at his disappointment, and brooding over his irksome confinement, Henry sat down with Willie, and began to amuse him with stories about the wind. He told him of a whirlwind or tornado he had once heard about, which unroofed several buildings, completely demolished others, and then cut a clean path for itself through a forest, for nearly a mile, prostrating every tree in its course, and tearing up the ground as though an immense plough had run through it.

"Now," continued Henry, "I'll tell you something that happened a year or two ago, not a great way from here. There was a stage-coach crossing the moun-

tains, one blustering afternoon, with a number of passengers. They got along pretty well, until they came to a place where the wind blew tremendously. They call it the bellows-pipe of the mountains, the wind rushes through the place so strong."

"Does it blow there all the time?" inquired Willie.

"No, I suppose not," replied Henry; "but it blew like everything, that day. The trunks and bundles on the top of the stage blew off, first. When the driver stopped to go after them, the passengers were so frightened that they got out; and then the body of the coach was so light, that the wind lifted it right off from the wheels."

"What became of the horses?" inquired Willie.

"Oh, they were too heavy to blow away," replied Henry; "but they must have been pretty well frightened. I suppose some of the men held them. But there was a lady among the passengers that actually blew away into the fields. Some men had to go after her, and help her back, for she could n't stand before the wind. The men lost their hats, and you can't imagine what a time they had of it. They were afraid to travel any further, while the wind blowed so

hard. So they went to a tavern that was near, and stayed all night; and the next day they finished their journey."

"Is that all?" inquired Willie; "I thought you were going to say the house blew down."

"No, not quite so bad as that," added Henry. "The man that built the house, knew the winds blew very hard in that place, and I suppose he made his house just as strong as he could, so that it might stand the hardest blows. But I should n't wonder if the house rocked a little that night, after all."

"Our house is strong, is n't it? It would take a pretty hard wind to start it, do n't you think so?" inquired Willie.

"Yes, this house is firm enough," replied Henry; "we do n't feel the wind here at all, to speak of. Now you keep still a few minutes, Willie, and I'll see if I can't write you a little song about the wind."

"Oh, do! do! that's just what I should like," exclaimed Willie.

Henry occasionally amused himself by writing rhymes, for which exercise he had quite a knack. So

he took his slate, and was soon deeply engaged in his "song," while Willie amused himself with some little experiments on the power of wind — setting a piece of wood up on end, and then trying to blow it over. In a little while, Henry finished his lines, and read them aloud. They were as follows :

"TO THE WIND.

" Blow, wind, blow!

Over the ice and over the snow,

Blow — blow — blow!

Rattle the windows and shake the doors,

Whistle down chimney, and creep up through the floors;

Send the old cod-fish* whizzing around,

And thrash the trees till they bend to the ground;

Blow up, and blow down — blow in and blow out —

Blow sideways, and crosswise, and blow all about;

But you can't start our house — it's as firm as a rock;

Willie and I only laugh at the shock.

So blow, wind, blow!

Over the ice and over the snow,

Blow — blow — blow!

And when you are done, then go — go — go!

And do n't you come back, oh, no — no — no!"

Willie was delighted with this little song, and made Henry repeat it over and over again, which he did in

* The vane on the barn.

a half singing, half reciting tone. After hearing it several times, Willie was able to repeat it himself, and I can assure you he clapped his hands with glee the first time he reached the "no—no—no!" without tripping over a single word.

Willie now teased Henry to draw some pictures on the other side of the slate—for notwithstanding he had transferred the wind song to his memory, he would not yet risk rubbing it out from the slate. So Henry made several pictures, such as a horse, a cow, a woman, a barn, etc. I would show you a specimen or two of them, if I were not afraid you would laugh at them. But you should remember that it is not for any one person to know or do everything. Because a girl sews, beautifully, you ought not to expect that she will sing like a nightingale; and if a boy writes clever rhymes, that is no reason why he ought to draw fine pictures. But Henry's rude drawings answered their end. They pleased Willie, and that was all they were designed to do.

But Henry drew one picture on his slate that I think you will like to look at. It was a picture of a top, drawn in writing, or rather a little poem arranged

in the form of a top, which he had learned to make some time before. Here it is:

THE
TOP,
THE
TOP,
YOU
SEE
HIM
HOP,

SOON AS YOU LET HIM DROP,
AND BY THE WHIP HE'S MADE TO SKIP;
HOW STILL HE KEEPS WHEN FAST HE SLEEPS;
BUT NOW HE NODS, HE SOON WILL FALL,
FOR WHIP ONCE MORE HE SEEMS TO
CALL; PUT ON THE LASH WHILE
YET HE SPINS; WHO FASTEST
GOES THE SOONEST WINS.
HIM HERE YOU SEE,
DRAWN OUT BY ME,
AND ENDED
WITH A
POINT-
ED
V

"Now tell me another story," said Willie, after he had looked at the pictures as long as he wished.

"I can't think of any more stories, now," replied Henry.

"Yes, do please to think of one more," persisted Willie.

"Well, I'll tell you a story I learned a long time ago," said Henry. "It is this. But you don't like long stories, do you?" he added, as if a sudden thought had struck him.

"Yes, I do — I like long ones the best," was the reply.

"Well, then," resumed Henry, "if I tell you this story, you must try to keep awake till I get through, and you must give close attention, too, so as not to lose any of it."

"I will — I don't feel sleepy a bit," eagerly replied Willie.

"Then I'll tell you the story," said Henry. "It is this:

"There was a man,
And he had a calf;
And that's half.
He took it out of the stall,
And put it on a wall;
And that's all."

"Pooh! that isn't any story at all," cried Willie, with evident disappointment, after a pause. "Come, tell me a real story — you said you would."

"Yes, that's a story, and a pretty good one, too, I

think," said Henry. "Come, say it after me, and see if you do n't think so."

Willie repeated the lines after him, until he had learned them. Though at first vexed with the story, he now seemed rather pleased with it.

Willie sat silently at a window for several minutes, watching the vain attempts of a venerable and solemn cock-turkey to maintain his dignity in a wind blowing at the rate of twenty or thirty miles an hour; and then he suddenly exclaimed:—

"Henry, I do n't think we shall have to send you to Marcus, after all."

"Why not?" inquired Henry, laughing.

"Because you are good enough without going to him," replied Willie.

"Well, that's a bran-new idea," added Henry. "I should like to know how long that's been — ever since dinner-time?"

"No, a good while longer than that — I can't tell how long," replied Willie.

Willie had often heard his parents speak of Marcus, and knew something of his success as a "boy-tamer." It was a habit with him, whenever he saw a

boy who did not come up to the mark of duty, to say he "ought to be sent to Marcus." One day, while his mother was reproving Henry for some fault, Willie followed up the admonition with the remark, uttered with all soberness:—

"We shall have to send you to Marcus, if you don't behave better."

Now although Willie did not mean any harm, Henry thought it was impudent for such a little boy to speak to him in that way; and when Mrs. Allen, instead of reproving her boy, seemed to repress a smile with difficulty, Henry felt angry with both of them. But the matter soon blew over, and Henry never thought of it again until this unexpected taking back of the offensive remark. While he was musing over this gratifying proof that his good resolution had not been wholly in vain, Jessie suddenly made her appearance, to his great joy. She said she could stop only a few minutes, but had run over because she was anxious to hear from him. Through the week she had felt many misgivings about Henry; but now she heard from his lips that he had kept his promise, and saw by his altered appearance the beneficial effect it had exerted

upon him; and Willie artlessly confirmed it all by telling what a first-rate time they had had all the afternoon, and repeating the little song Henry had written for him. It was a happy moment to Jessie; and when Henry promised her in the entry, as she was about leaving, that he would keep on in that same way until she saw him again, she went home with a lighter heart than she had before known for several weeks.

When Mrs. Allen got home, she found the tea-kettle boiling, the table ready for supper, and the house in as good order as when she left it—three things which she hardly dared to expect. She was still further surprised, when Willie, at the first opportunity, commenced telling a very long story about what had been going on at home through the afternoon. “Well,” she thought to herself, “Henry *can* be a good boy, when he pleases to be.”

CHAPTER VIII.

SABBATH LESSONS.



JESSIE had a small, old-fashioned miniature in her trunk, at which she often gazed intently and sadly, in her hours of retirement. It was a

likeness of a young man of pleasing features and apparent intelligence — one who was evidently on good terms with himself and the world, and who had known little of the rough experiences of life. There were very sad associations connected with this picture,

in Jessie's mind. She never could look at it without recalling the lines of the poet —

“Of all sad words of tongue or of pen,
The saddest are these — it might have been.”

That young man was the only son of the most prosperous farmer in all that region. Foolishly petted by his parents, he was not required to perform any hard work, because he did not like to do it. For the same reason, he left school and gave up all thoughts of educating himself, before he was fourteen years old. After an idle, unprofitable and not perfectly blameless youth, he thought it would be a fine thing to become a merchant, and so his father set him up in business in a large town twenty or thirty miles distant. It was at this period that the miniature was painted, for a young lady who shortly after became his wife. For a while he flourished; but owing to his loose habits, and his want of business training, he soon became a bankrupt, his father being the principal sufferer. Within a year after this, he followed both of his parents to the grave. The fine farm thus came into his possession, but it was heavily mortgaged for debt, owing to his own failure.

and to the fact that his father, during the latter part of his life, had used intoxicating liquors to excess, to the injury of his business and property. The son followed but too swiftly in the steps of the father, emulating, not his many years of honest and prosperous toil, but only the sad errors by which he embittered his last days. He became a fast-bound victim of strong drink. He saw his patrimony slowly melting away, and his family coming to want. The pinching hand of poverty at length came upon them, and he felt ashamed to look his neighbors in the face, so bitter were his self-reproaches. He made one or two feeble attempts to reform, and then died as the fool dieth. He was overtaken by a dreadful snow-storm while intoxicated, and the next day was found stiff in death, with a jug of rum by his side.

Such was the sad history of Jessie's father, whose tragic death occurred only about two months previous to the time of which I am now writing. No wonder the tears filled her eyes, as she gazed on the handsome face of the miniature, and thought how different might have been the life and destiny of the one who sat for it. She saw in that capacious brow, in that mild and

thoughtful eye, and in those fine features, indications of capacities and feelings, that had never been developed. Oh, how mournful was it to contrast these things with the coarse, bloated and besotted features which relentless memory always called up at the mention of father!

Such thoughts as these were passing through Jessie's mind, one Sabbath morning, as she sat in her room, awaiting the signal to start for church. The weather was dull and drizzly, and her feelings were so much in sympathy with it, that she could scarcely keep the tears from her eyes. She thought of her father, whose miniature she held before her; of her mother, whose health was quite poor, as a letter received a few days before had informed her; of her brother Sam, in his gloomy prison cell, who had not taken the slightest notice of the affectionate letters she had sent him; of Henry, with his peculiar trials and dangers; and of Benny, too, on whose little grave the snows were for the first time melting. Everything seemed to present its dark side to her, and she felt as though she could spend the day in weeping.

It was a rule in Mrs. Page's house that every one

should attend church regularly on the Sabbath, unless prevented by sickness or other sufficient cause. Perhaps I should say it *had been* a rule, for it had now become a custom — a habit — a matter of mutual agreement, rather than of law. Oscar chafed a little against the regulation, when he first came into the family; but finding that it would not be bent to suit him, he submitted to it, and now had no desire to absent himself from the house of public worship. The distance from Mrs. Page's to the church was about a mile, and the family generally walked, unless the weather was bad. On the morning to which reference has been made, the female portion rode to church, and Marcus and the boys walked.

The sermon which the good pastor, Mr. Merrill, preached that morning, seemed intended expressly for Jessie. It was exactly adapted to the frame of mind in which she went up to the house of God. The course of thought was so plain and simple, that I think I can tell you about it so that even the youngest reader can understand it, and feel some interest in it. This was the text, and a sweet one it is: — "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

You will find it in the twenty-second verse of the fifty-fifth Psalm. The pastor said that everybody who comes into the world, brings a burden with him. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the wise and the ignorant, the virtuous and the wicked, all have their burdens. These burdens have various names, such as temptations, trials, disappointments, regrets, sorrows, sins, etc.; but there is one general name under which they may all be included, and that is, unhappiness.

The next thing the preacher noticed, was, that we are all running about trying to get rid of our burdens. We don't want to be unhappy. Some try to laugh away their sorrows. They may succeed with a few of the lighter ones, but there are others too far down in the heart to be reached by laughter. Others mope, and cry, and fret over their troubles, and so make them worse. Others travel to new scenes, or plunge into new cares, or yield themselves up to their passions and desires, to get rid of the burden, but in vain. It only grows heavier, instead of lighter. And then the pastor repeated a German fable about a man who had a frightful goblin in his house, which haunted him

day and night. After trying every way he could think of to get rid of the goblin, and all in vain, he shut up his house, and set it on fire, so that the tormentor might roast within, and flung himself into the saddle, and galloped away, homeless and penniless, but merry in the thought that he was at last rid of the demon that made his life miserable. So after galloping a while, he turned round to see if his house burned merrily, and what was it he saw? The house burned, indeed, but the goblin, there he sat, cowered behind the rider, on his saddle's cantle! "And do you know," inquired the pastor, "what is the goblin's name? His name is Sorrow."

But, continued the preacher, there is a way, and only one way, to get rid of this pressing burden, this terrible goblin in our hearts. It is pointed out in the text. Bring all your cares and sorrows and cast them upon the Lord, and he will sustain you. He does not promise to remove them at once; but if he does not take them away now, he will give you strength to bear them, so that they will seem light. We must not expect to escape all pain, disappointment and trial in this world. It would not be good for us, if we show

But we can be happy, in spite of these, if we cast our burden upon the Lord, for He careth for us. The only truly happy people are those who have done this. The Christian can sing, in his darkest hour :

“ I’ll drop my burden at His feet,
And bear a song away.”

The concluding portion of the sermon was devoted to an explanation of the way in which we can cast our burdens on the Lord. The preacher said we must do just what the little child does, when any trouble befalls it, and it runs crying to its mother. It believes its mother can and will relieve it. That is *faith*. It pours out its little complaints and desires. That is *prayer*. It is ready, if it goes in a proper spirit, to follow its mother’s directions. That is *submission*. So, if we would cast our burdens upon the Lord, we must believe in His promises, and ask Him to sustain us, and submit ourselves to His will.

After the morning service, Jessie attended the Sabbath school, as was her custom. She was a member of a Bible class of young ladies, and took much interest in its weekly lessons. The subject of the lesson,

on this Sabbath, was *prayer*. The point of inquiry was simply *why* we ought to pray, the manner in which the duty should be performed being reserved for another lesson. Each member of the class had been requested to note down on a slip of paper such reasons as she could think of for offering prayer to God, and most of them had done so. The teacher called upon one of the younger pupils first, to give a reason for believing prayer is a duty.

"Because God commands it, in the Bible," replied the girl, and she quoted several texts, in proof of the assertion.

"Yes," replied the teacher, "God requires it, and I am glad you have given this as the first reason, for it is sufficient to make the duty imperative, if there were no other. Can any of you think of any other texts which inculcate the duty of prayer?"

A number of additional passages from the Bible were repeated, and then another pupil was asked to give a second reason why prayer is a duty.

"Because we are dependent upon God for everything, and it seems proper that we should ask Him to

supply our wants, just as a child asks his father for what he wants," was the reply.

"Very good," replied the teacher. "Nothing is more natural than that we should pray to God. We cannot take a step, or draw a breath, and our hearts cannot beat for an instant, without Him; and how strange it is that any of us should ever rise up in the morning or lie down at night, without asking Him to preserve us! What should we think of a little child who had a very kind father, and yet never took any notice of him,—never showed any gratitude for his goodness, never asking him for any favor, and never even spoke to him? And yet this is the way in which many people treat their heavenly Father."

The teacher then called upon another scholar for a reason in favor of prayer, who gave the following:

"We ought to pray, because we are sinners, and need forgiveness."

"Yes," resumed the teacher, "that is another good argument for prayer. "We are not only dependent upon our heavenly Father for everything we need, but we have rebelled against Him, and we feel that we deserve to be punished. Now if we have not

enough gratitude to make us thank Him for the thousands of blessings He bestows, one would suppose that we should fear Him enough to ask Him to forgive our sins, and save us from their consequences. I once asked a boy about a dozen years old, if he ever prayed. He hesitated a moment, as if afraid even to talk about such a thing, and then replied, 'No, but I used to when I was a little boy.' 'Why don't you pray now?' I asked. 'Oh, I left off a good while ago,' he said. 'Why did you leave off?' I inquired. His lips quivered a moment, and then he replied, 'Because I thought I was too old.' 'Too old to pray!' I exclaimed; 'why, that is the strangest thing I ever heard of. I thought the older people were, the more they needed to pray. They certainly have more favors to be thankful for, and more sins to be forgiven, as they advance in years; and if that is the case, don't you think they need to pray more than they did when they were young? When did you stop praying?' I inquired. He said he could not remember exactly, but he thought it was about two years previous to that time. 'Well,' I said, 'have you received any blessings from God, during these two years?' He

said he had, a great many. ‘And have you committed any sins during that period?’ I continued. ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘I suppose I sin every day.’ I asked him if he did n’t think he was exposed to more temptations, at that time, than he was two years before. I suppose he had never thought much about that, for he did not give me any decided answer. I told him I thought it was usually the case with the young, that their temptations to do wrong increased very rapidly every year, until they reached maturity; and then I put to him the question, whether, with all these increased blessings, and sins, and temptations, he was not under much greater obligations to pray, at that time, than he was two years before. And what kind of an answer do you suppose he gave me? Why, he said all the boys would laugh at him, if they knew he prayed! I felt almost disheartened, when he said that. Only think of a boy twelve years old giving such a ridiculous excuse as that for treating his Maker with utter neglect! But I did not let him hide himself long behind such a miserable refuge. ‘What,’ said I, ‘is it possible you are *ashamed* to say any thing to your best Friend, for fear a few thoughtless boys will laugh at you? And

is it possible you can make such a confession without hiding your face in shame? Why, it seems to me, if you ever did a thing in this world that you ought to be heartily ashamed of, it was giving up prayer to God. I do n't think any body *can* do a much meaner thing than that, and instead of being ashamed of praying, I wonder that everybody is not ashamed to live without prayer.' Then I said it was no matter if the whole world laughed at us — that should not deter us from what we know to be our duty. But I told him I knew '*all* the boys' would not laugh at him for praying, and that even the few foolish ones who did laugh, would secretly respect him in their hearts for doing his duty. Now, Jessie, can you give us a fourth reason why we ought to pray?"

"We know we ought to pray," said Jessie, "because our feelings and conscience tell us so. There is a voice within, a sort of instinct, that urges us to pray. This is proved by the fact that even the most degraded heathen offer up prayers to their idols. It is said there never was a nation or religion that did not have some form of prayer. Of course, if prayer is so universal, it must be a dictate of nature."

“Very good,” said the teacher; “and this is not only true of nations, but of individuals. I doubt whether any person ever lived to mature age, who never offered a prayer at some period of his life, in some way or other. Let some terrible calamity suddenly threaten even the most abandoned man, and how quickly does he begin to pray! Even infidels cannot repress this natural instinct of prayer. It is said that Thomas Paine, when in danger of shipwreck, called loudly on God for mercy; and Lord Herbert, the celebrated deist,* after he had written a book – against Christianity, actually prayed to God to tell him whether he should publish it. I have even read an argument written by an avowed infidel, trying to prove that it was right and consistent for an atheist to pray to God. He maintained that if there were only one chance in a thousand that there is a Deity who hears prayer, and will reward or punish us for our

* A Deist is one who rejects the Bible, but believes in a Supreme Being. By an Atheist, is commonly understood one who professes to believe there is no God; but there are very few if any *real* atheists. We read that “the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;” but he does not, he cannot believe it. The term Infidel is applied to both atheists and deists.

conduct, it was a matter of policy to call upon Him, rather than run the risk of offending Him."

"Prayer brings down blessings," was given by another pupil as a fifth reason why we ought to pray; and in proof, she cited several examples from the Old and New Testaments.

"How do you account for it, then, that some people who never pray receive so many blessings?" inquired the teacher.

"It is because God is so good, that he often bestows blessings when they are not asked for," was the reply.

"You are right," said the teacher. "The Lord is good to all; He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil; but He often bestows special favors in answer to prayer. His choicest blessings are spiritual ones, and these He usually gives only in answer to prayer. They are offered to us conditionally. We must ask for them if we want them."

Another reason was now called for, but the class seemed to have exhausted the theme, and no one responded. The teacher then continued:

"Supposing it were possible to overthrow all the arguments that have been mentioned, there is one

more that would still have great weight with me. It is this — prayer exerts a good influence on our hearts. It improves our temper and disposition. It makes us better children, better parents, better men and women. It seems as if God rewarded us for the very act of coming to Him in prayer, even when He does not think it best to grant our petition. It appears to me that if this were the only benefit we derived from prayer, we should be very unwise to give it up.

“Can any of you think of another argument in favor of this duty?” inquired the teacher. No one replying, she continued: “The fact that the best people that have ever lived have always been praying people, is, I think, a strong argument in favor of prayer. The Bible is full of examples of this kind, and so is all history. The purest men that the world has ever known, and those that have done the most for mankind, have been men who communed with God. I should like to have the members of the class name some examples, if they can think of any.”

Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, Paul, and several other Bible saints, were mentioned by different scholars.

“Can you think of any striking examples besides those that are recorded in the Bible?” inquired the teacher.

“Washington,” suggested one of the girls.

“Yes,” resumed the teacher, “Washington is an illustration of this truth, from our own history. It is well known that he was a man of prayer. And so was Alfred the Great, the wisest and best ruler England ever had. We are told that he devoted one third of his time to study and devotion. The same rule holds good even among the heathen. Socrates was one of the purest of the Greek philosophers, and though he knew nothing of the Scriptures, he rebuked those who did not look to God in prayer for guidance and assistance. Now if such men as these, and thousands of others of the wisest and best that ever lived, thought it a duty and a privilege to pray, it seems to me their example ought to have some influence on us.”

The teacher then reviewed the arguments for prayer that had been brought forward, requesting each scholar to note them down in the following form and order :

"WHY WE OUGHT TO PRAY."

- "1. Because God commands it.
- "2. Because we are dependent upon Him.
- "3. Because we are sinners against Him.
- "4. Because instinct prompts us to pray.
- "5. Because God answers prayer.
- "6. Because prayer benefits the heart.
- "7. Because the wisest and best men pray."

The lesson was one of much interest to Jessie. She had learned something of the value of prayer during the past few months. She had often secretly poured her troubles into the gracious ear that is ever ready to hear, and had found comfort in doing so. Her heart warmly responded to all the motives to pray that had been mentioned, and but for her diffidence in alluding to her own religious feelings, she would have suggested an eighth motive, viz., "Because it is delightful to pray."

Before retiring at night, Jessie copied into her journal the foregoing list of motives for prayer, adding the eighth. She then knelt down, as was her daily habit, and offered to her Maker the homage of a grateful heart.

CHAPTER IX.

RAINY-DAY DIVERSIONS.

THE dull Sabbath morning mentioned in the last chapter, proved the beginning of one of those long and dreary storms, not unusual in the spring of the year. The sun did not show himself for half an hour during the whole week, but snow, sleet, rain, drizzle, high winds, and leaden skies, had everything their own way. The old people said it was the “equinocial,” or “line” storm; and their opinion was not in the least disturbed, if Marcus suggested that many scientific men believed the notion of such a storm to be a popular delusion. It certainly was not a very auspicious time to express any doubts on this point—in the midst of a seven days’ storm, happening in the very week of the equinox; so Marcus, without seriously doubting that the men of science were right,

concluded it were wiser to postpone any argument on the subject until a dryer season.

The younger members of Mrs. Page's family found little chance for out-door sports, during this tedious storm. Still, the time did not pass heavily with them. All but Kate and Otis had their regular daily work to perform ; but as it was divided among several pairs of hands, it was not very arduous, at this season of the year. Jessie's work, however, was an exception, for she insisted upon devoting most of her time, when released from study, to household duties. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, Marcus frequently invited Oscar and Ronald to help him about some extra job or other ; but all such jobs were now finished up, as far as they could be until the season should open for out-door operations. The farming tools had been put in complete order, the potatoes sorted for planting, the cellar cleaned out, and when Wednesday afternoon came, with a pouring rain, Marcus told the boys they must amuse themselves as best they could, as he had nothing for them to do.

For awhile, the state of things was rather dull in-doors as well as out. Marcus and Oscar were

reading. Kate sat down to practise a music lesson, but the notes which her fingers called forth were so dull and spiritless, that she soon abandoned the attempt. Otis sat looking dreamily out of the window, towards the distant hills just visible through the rain. Ronald, after trying in vain to get somebody to go out to the barn and "have some fun," went alone; but he evidently did not find what he went after, for he soon returned, repeating, on the way, a queer alliterative exercise in rapid pronunciation he had recently learned for his own amusement. It was as follows, only each line was repeated in four different ways, as indicated at the beginning:

"Andrew Airpump asked his aunt her ailment,
 Did Andrew, etc.,
 If Andrew, etc.,
 Where is the, etc.

Billy Button bought a buttered biseuit,
 Did, etc,

Captain Crackskull cracked a catchpole's coxeomb.

Davy Doldrum dreamt he drove a dragon.

Enoch Elkrig eat an empty eggshell.

Francis Fripple flogged a Frenchman's filly.

Gaffer Gilpin got a goose and gander.

Humphrey Hunchback had a hundred hedgehogs.

Inigo Impey itched for an Indian image.

Jumping Jackey jeered a jesting juggler

Kimbo Kemble kicked his kinsman's kettle.
Lanky Lawrence lost his lass and lobster.
Matthew Mendlegs missed a mangled monkey
Neddy Noodle nipped his neighbor's nutmeg.
Oliver Oglethorpe ogled an owl and oyster.
Peter Piper picked a peck of peppers.
Quixote Quixite quizzed a queerish quidbox.
Rawdy Rumpus rode a rawboned racer.
Sammy Smellie smelt a smell of small coal.
Tiptoe Tommy turned a Turk for twopence.
Uncle Usher urged an ugly urchin.
Villiam Voedy viped his vig and vaistcoat.
Walter Waddle won a walking wager.
X Y Z have made my brains to crack O.
X smokes, Y snuffs, Z chews too strong tobacco.
Though oft by X Y Z much lore is taught,
Still Peter Piper beats them all to nought."

Ronald kept on repeating these very sensible lines after he had entered the house; but before he had finished "Captain Crackskull," he was interrupted by Marcus, who said:—

"Ronald, if you are going through with that long yarn, I think you had better take it back to the barn with you, and reel it off to the cows."

"I can say it right straight through, to X Y Z," said Ronald.

"Well, we'll take your word for it—we wont ask you to prove it," replied Marcus.

"What do you call it, when all the words in a line begin with the same letter?" inquired Ronald.

"When two or more words, near together, commence with the same letter, it is called *alliteration*," replied Marcus. "It is what the poet calls 'apt alliteration's artful aid.'"

"I've got a curious specimen of alliteration, that I found in an old newspaper," said Kate; and from a small roll of paper clippings which she had in her pocket she drew forth the curiosity. It contained five little poems, or "univocalic verses," as they were called, each of which contained only one of the vowels. The following is a specimen. It is on the fall of Eve, and contains no vowel but *e*, as will be observed:

"Eve, Eden's Empress, needs defended be:
The Sêrpent greets her when she seeks the tree;
Serene, she sees the speckled tempter creep;
Gentle he seems — perversest schemer deep —
Yet endless pretexts, ever fresh prefers,
Perverts her senses, revels when she errs,
Sneers when she weeps, regrets, repents she fell;
When deep revenged, reseeks the nether hell!"

"That is not alliteration, exactly," observed Marcus, "as the words do not begin with the same letter. I

should call it a sort of 'task poetry.' By the way, Kate, did you ever see a little task poem that old George Herbert wrote?" and taking down a volume from the book-case, he turned to the following lines, in which it will be seen, the rhyming words are obtained by dropping a letter from the last word of the preceding line:

"Inclose me still, for fear I *start*,
Be to me rather sharp and *tart*,
Than let me want thy hand and *art*."

"Such sharpness shows the sweetest *friend*,
Such cuttings rather heal than *rend*,
And such beginnings touch their *end*."

Marcus turned to a still more curious specimen of task poetry, in the same book. It was a couplet, formed of three lines of the fragments of words, so that those of the middle one read with either of the other two. Here it is:

	cur-	f-	w-	d-	dis-	and p-
A	-sed	-iend	-rought	-eath	-ease	-ain.
	bles-	fr-	b-	br-	and	ag-

The couplet is to be read thus :

“ A cursed fiend wrought death, disease and pain ;
A blessed friend brought breath and ease again.”

“ Come, all hands, I move that we have a game of ‘ thread-paper poetry ’ — we have n’t played it for a long time,” said Kate.

“ What sort of a game is that ? ” inquired Jessie, who had but just come in from the kitchen, and sat down to sew.

“ Why, did n’t you ever play it ? ” inquired Kate, with surprise. “ It ’s a real good game, if you have the right sort of players. The first player takes a slip of paper, and writes a line of poetry upon it — original or selected, just as he pleases. Then he folds the paper so as to hide the line, but he tells the next player what the last word is, and he must write a line to rhyme with it, and another line beside ; and so they pass it around, until they have got enough, and then it is read aloud. It makes great sport, sometimes, I can assure you.”

The company generally assented to Kate’s proposal, and it was agreed, at the outset, that each line should

contain eight syllables, every other one accented, commencing with the second. No other restriction was laid upon any one. Jessie was selected to commence the play, and she wrote the following line:

“How dark the day! how drear the scene!”

Doubling over the paper, she passed it to Oscar, and thus it went round the circle twice, Marcus finally winding up the poem with an extra rhyme, to give it a fitting conclusion. He then unfolded the paper, and read the contents aloud. Here is a copy of it. The figures indicate where it passed from one hand to another:

1. How dark the day! how drear the scene!
2. Now I do think you 're real mean
 To get me into such a scrape!
3. I sing the glories of the grape,
 Delicious fruit, so rich and nice.
4. Oh, I can do it in a trice—
 My lines are written—here they are,
5. Shining like evening's brightest star,
 Or like the fire-bug's milder ray!
6. This is a very rainy day,
 The walking, it is dreadful bad.
7. To find a rhyme I'm always glad,
 So this I write, and pass't along.

8. I vow, it is a curious song,
All shreds, and patchwork, and so forth.
9. This horrid weather makes me cough —
I had hard work to find that rhyme;
10. But I wont give it up this time,
Although I own I'm not a poet.
11. If I am wrong, then please to show it,
This is the best that I can do.
12. And now, good friends, we've all got through,
And this queer song I give to you."

"Now let's write some cento verses," cried Kate, after this had been read.

"What kind of verses are those?" inquired Otis.

"Don't you know what cento verses are?" replied Kate. "Why, you take a number of lines of poetry from different authors, and arrange them together so that they will rhyme, and make some sort of sense — that's the way to make cento verses."

"Pooh! I don't think much of that," said Ronald.

"A person needs to have a good deal of poetry at his tongue's end, to find amusement in writing cento verses," observed Marcus. "Kate and Jessie have a poetical turn, and might succeed at it, but I am afraid the rest of us would find it rather hard work."

"Well, I'm going to try," said Kate; "and if there

isn't poetry enough on my tongue's end, there's plenty up in the book-case."

Kate took a piece of paper, and commenced jotting down some lines, occasionally consulting Jessie, or turning to a volume of poetry. Ronald and Otis found more congenial amusement, in a couple of toys of which they had recently come in possession. They were "pith-tumblers," made by an ingenious boy in their class, who realized quite a little fortune of pocket-money by manufacturing these comical figures for his mates. They were made of the pith of elder trees, and the figures were neatly cut, to represent Turks, Chinese Mandarins, Brahmins, clowns, and other characters. Ronald's tumbler was a Turk, and



he named him the *Grand Mufti*. He was seated on half a bullet, composedly smoking his long pipe. Otis called his figure the *Sleepy*

Brahmin. It had a lead cap, and consequently was under the disagreeable necessity of standing on its

head. Both the Mufti and the Brahmin, when jarred, seemed ready to fall over, but were sure to right themselves very quickly, owing to the centre of gravity being in the leaden base. While the boys were playing with these trifles, Marcus stepped out of the room, and soon returned with a bottle and a couple of forks. Seeing the curiosity of the boys was excited, Marcus asked them if they could make a quarter of a dollar spin round on the point of a needle.

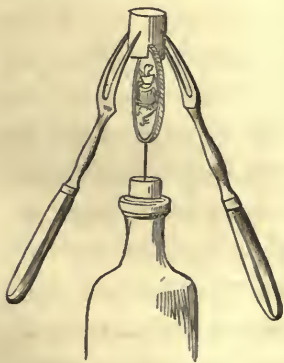
“Give me a quarter, and I’ll try,” said Ronald.

Marcus chose to make the trial himself, and in a few minutes he accomplished the feat, to the no small

astonishment of the boys.

This was the way he did it. In the cork of the bottle he fixed a needle.

He then took another cork, and cut a slit in it, large enough to receive the edge of the coin. Then he stuck into the cork the two forks, opposite each other, with the handles inclining down-



site each other, with the handles inclining down-

wards. The edge of the coin was now placed on the needle, and the whole apparatus, — coin, cork, and forks, — was made to spin round without falling off.

“Now, Ronald, can you explain the philosophy of that?” inquired Marcus.

“No, sir, I’m sure I can’t,” replied Ronald.

“Well, can you explain why your little pith-tumblers operate as they do?” inquired Marcus.

“It’s because the centre of gravity is in one end of the figures, in the lead,” replied Ronald.

“What do you mean by the centre of gravity?” inquired Marcus.

“Why, the point where the weight of the whole thing is evenly balanced,” said Ronald; “for instance, if I balance this book on the end of my finger, the point that rests on my finger will be the centre of gravity.”

“Yes, you have the idea,” resumed Marcus; “and this little experiment is explained on the same principle. The weight of the forks, projecting as they do so much below the coin, brings the centre of gravity of the arrangement below the point of the needle,

which is the point of suspension; and the coin is much less liable to fall off than it would be if the centre of gravity were higher."

"Now let me show you a little experiment," said Ronald. "I'm going to put two chairs back to back, take off my shoes, and jump over them. Do you believe I can do it?"

"This is n't a suitable place for such rough play—if you want to do any jumping, you had better go out-doors," said Mrs. Page.

"But I wont do the least harm in the world," replied Ronald. "Let me show you how I do it, wont you?"

Mrs. Page making no reply, Ronald inferred that she consented; and placing the chairs as he had described, he took off his shoes, and drawing back to the end of the room, ran and jumped over the — *shoes*, to the great amusement of those who were watching the "experiment."

Marcus and Oscar had resumed their reading, and Ronald and Otis now began to amuse themselves with a puzzle which they called the Möslem Oracle. It was a table, divided by lines into a hundred little

squares, in each of which was written a letter, as follows:

d	w	w	a	w	o	h	a	b	h
i	o	i	s	o	t	d	t	t	w
w	o	a	a	a	i	e	n	i	i
t	s	d	n	t	h	i	a	a	e
o	t	t	n	t	u	w	t	d	h
t	i	a	e	s	f	l	i	n	u
e	l	n	j	c	a	d	t	o	c
r	o	h	y	e	o	w	y	p	e
f	r	w	e	d	i	o	i'	a	e
l	n	s	c	t	l	g	h	e	h

The boy from whom they obtained a copy of this Oracle, told them he had read that it was sometimes actually used by the superstitious Moslems, when they were in doubt about any thing they thought of doing. The rule is to repeat certain verses of the Koran, and then to place the finger upon the table, without looking at it. The Moslem then looks to see on what letter his finger has rested, and writes it down, with every *fifth* following letter in the table, until he has

got back to his starting place. For example, we will suppose his finger fell on the letter *e* in the sixth line. He writes down every fifth letter, and the following appears :

enjoy peace abstain and

In reading the sentence, he commences with the first of the letters taken from the upper line; and so the utterance of his Oracle is :

“Abstain, and enjoy peace.”

This Oracle is capable of giving five distinct answers, as any reader can easily verify; and commence with what letter we will, we shall obtain one of these answers. It is, of course, a superstition, which gives any authority to these answers; but it is curious to observe that the Oracle is so arranged as to be likely to do good rather than harm to those who consult it. It contains but one affirmative and four negative answers, and it is evident that its framer knew that when men hesitate about doing an action, it is generally safer to abstain from it than to perform it.

Men are more disposed to consult oracles for leave to do wrong, than for advice to do right.

Kate had now finished her cento poem, and read it aloud. It was as follows :

When the immortals at their banquet lay	[<i>Moore.</i>
Butchered to make a Roman holiday,	[<i>Byron.</i>
By all their country's wishes blest,	[<i>Collins.</i>
The fright was general; but the female band,	[<i>Dryden.</i>
Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand,	[<i>Milton.</i>
'Scaped all the toils that life molest,	[<i>Cowley.</i>
And on a sudden sung the hundredth Psalm.	[<i>Gay.</i>
Of living lakes, in summer's noontide calm.	[<i>Akenside.</i>
The wanton troopers, riding by,	[<i>Marvell.</i>
To sweep the cobwebs from the sky,	[<i>Mother Goose.</i>
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,	[<i>Goldsmith.</i>
Peered from the curtained gallery,	[<i>Croly.</i>
And strewed with sudden carcasses the land.	[<i>Armstrong.</i>
The piper loud and louder blew	[<i>Burns.</i>
A circle regularly true,	[<i>Prior.</i>
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills	[<i>Byron.</i>
Twelve bottles ranged upon the board,	[<i>Gay.</i>
And the world's cold neglect, which surest kills,	[<i>Hunt.</i>
He watched, he served, he cheered his lord.	[<i>Spencer.</i>
O heaven! he cried, my bleeding country save,	[<i>Campbell.</i>
Poor human ruins, tottering o'er the grave!	[<i>Young.</i>
By that dread name, we wave the sword on high,	[<i>Campbell.</i>
When in the valley of Jehoshaphat,	[<i>Dryden.</i>
For whom contending kings are proud to die—	[<i>Falconer.</i>
Die, and endow a college or a eat!	[<i>Pope.</i>

"That's pretty fair," said Marcus; "but I suspect

memory did n't have a great deal to do with it — only a few of the lines have a familiar sound to my ear."

"Well, to tell the truth," replied Kate, "my memory is one of the kind that never can think of anything when you happen to want it; so I helped it along a little, with two or three books of poetry."

The request was general that a copy of these lines, and also of the "thread-paper poem," should be furnished for publication in the "Home Wreath." The successive numbers of this little paper were carefully kept on file, after all had read them, and it was a custom to insert in its pages anything of suitable length that the family wished to preserve. The next number of the "Wreath," which appeared on Saturday afternoon, contained one of these poems, together with an unusual variety of original matter, which an editorial paragraph pleasantly attributed to the protracted storm, remarking that "it was an ill wind that blew nobody any good." Among the contributions were several arithmetical problems. One was as follows: "So arrange four nines as to make one hundred." Another was: — "If you take nine from six, ten from nine, and fifty from forty, there will then six remain."

Jessie, in the course of the evening, threw off the following rhyming answers to these questions, designing to send them to the editor for insertion the next week:

"Two nines I place upon a line,
 And that will make just ninety-nine; . . . 99
 In form of fraction then I write
 Nine-ninths, and to the first unite, . . . $\frac{9}{9}$
 And that the number makes just right . . . 100."

"From S, I, X, I take I, X,
 And that will leave an S,
 Thus standing by itself alone,
 And nothing more nor less.
 Then from I, X, I take the X,
 (So you can if you try,)
 And that, you see, leaves only this
 Poor slender letter I.

"From X, L, next, as Pat might say,
 The L I *disannex*,
 And then there's left, as here you see,
 This little saw-horse, X.
 These three remainders thus I fix,
 And they read plainly S, I, X."

Such were some of the ways in which the young folks in Mrs. Page's family amused themselves, when kept indoors by stress of weather.

CHAPTER X.

ALL FOOLS' DAY.

RONALD and Otis occupied the same chamber. It was in the second story of the house, and had two windows, one looking to the north-east and the other to the south-east. At this season of the year, Ronald was obliged to rise soon after day-break, to attend to his work. He was very apt to feel sleepy in the morning, and Marcus, who was an early riser, usually called him when it was time to get up. Otis, being a boarder, did not rise so early, but commonly slept until the sun poured its light into the chamber through the north-east window, and sometimes long after. He was, in fact, rather fond of his bed.

On the morning of the first day of April, Ronald played quite a serious trick upon his room-mate, by way of celebrating "All Fools' day." The windows

of their chamber happened to be provided with old-fashioned tight shutters, which, however, were not now used, curtains having been substituted for them. On the morning in question, Ronald arose very slyly, at early day-break, and commenced disarranging and secreting the several articles of Otis's every-day apparel. One of his suspenders he hid under the bed-clothes, and the other he tied into knots; he turned the legs of his pantaloons and the sleeves of his jacket inside out; deposited one stocking in his jacket pocket, and crowded the other into the toe of his shoe; hid the other shoe on the upper shelf of the closet, after emptying into it the contents of his trousers pockets; and, in short, put things into such a plight, that he supposed it would take Otis at least an hour to dress himself. He then closed the shutters, and left the room, carefully shutting the door, lest the movements of the rest of the family should disturb the sleeper.

Otis did not make his appearance at the breakfast table, when the bell rang, but as this had occasionally happened before, it did not excite any surprise. The table was left standing for him, after breakfast, and the

several members of the family went about their business. Ronald, somewhat to his disappointment, was despatched to school nearly an hour before the usual time, that he might do an errand in a distant part of the town, on his way. Before he started, he crept up to the door of his chamber, and, listening, heard the loud breathing of Otis, as if still asleep. As he passed out through the dining-room, he noticed a clean plate and knife at Otis's place, and impelled by the spirit of mischief which had taken possession of him, he snatched them from the table, and put dirty ones in their place. A moment after, Jessie came in, and began to clear off the table, when Miss Lee, who was in the kitchen, seeing Ronald about to leave, said :

"Before you go, Ronald, I wish you would run up stairs and call Otis—he has n't been to breakfast yet."

"Yes, ma'am, he's been to breakfast and gone," said Jessie, deceived by the appearance of the table.

"Then he was very quick about it, for I have n't seen him this morning," said Miss Lee.

Ronald said nothing, but, availing himself of Jessie's mistake, hurried away without calling Otis, con-

gratulating himself that his plot had worked so admirably. After doing his errand, he had time and opportunity to fool several of his school-mates, which he diligently improved. He made one simple boy believe that his back was covered with chalk, and thank him for drubbing it off in vigorous style, when there was not a particle of chalk upon the poor fellow's jacket. He exhibited to a group of boys what he called a "railroad whistle." It looked like an ordinary whistle, with a number of holes on the top, but he represented it as having remarkable power, if a boy only had wind enough to sound it. One of the boys, more curious than wise, gave it a vigorous blast, and blew into his face a cloud of flour, with which the whistle had been filled, to the great amusement of all who witnessed the experiment.

Ronald was born and lived for eight years among a people of French extraction, in Canada. He still remembered some of the habits and customs of his native village, among which was the observance of Easter. Easter is a festival in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, and is quite generally observed in European countries. It occurs about the first of

April. In some countries, it is customary to give eggs to the children, on this occasion, which are ornamented in various ways. In Ronald's native town, the children used to boil their Easter eggs in water containing a dye of some color, by which the shells became red, blue, purple, or of any other hue that was desired. If they wished to inscribe a name or ornament on an egg, they first plunged it into hot water, and then wrote the name or drew the design on the shell with tallow. The egg was then boiled in the colored water, but the dye would not penetrate any part of the shell which had been covered with grease, and consequently the ornament or inscription would appear white.

Ronald had been indulged in his Easter eggs every year since he was adopted into Mrs. Page's family. He called them Easter eggs, but they might more appropriately have been termed "April Fool" eggs, for, regardless of the ecclesiastical calendar, the first day of the fourth month was always Easter to him. He carried several of these stained eggs to school, on the morning whose history I am recounting; and after the "railroad whistle" experiment, he exhibited them to some of the girls. They were blue, with white

fillets around them, and looked quite pretty. Somebody inquiring about their strength, Ronald said they were boiled very hard, and would stand a pretty smart blow. He said he boiled them as soon as they were laid, which was the way to do, if you wanted a real hard egg. He invited two of the girls to make a trial of their hardness, by each taking an egg in her hand, and striking them together, promising that the egg which stood the test should be the property of the one who held it. They did so, and at the first trial, neither egg was damaged, the blow being too light. The next time, however, one of the eggs was crushed, but the other was uninjured.

The girl who won the blue egg, refused to hazard it again in a trial with an uncolored boiled egg, which Ronald wished her to submit it to. So Ronald drew from his pocket a second white egg, and persuaded Kate Sedgwick and another girl to a trial of strength, similar to the first. Each held the egg firmly in her palm, and measured the distance carefully with her eye, and then, after a moment's pause, came the shock, the crash, and the smash. And a smash it was indeed; for the egg Kate held was just as raw and ten-

der as when biddy laid it, and in the rude encounter, its liquid contents spirted out in an astonishing manner upon both the contestants, but especially upon Kate. The fragments that remained in her hand she hurled at Ronald's head, but the rogue was too spry for her, and they fell short of the mark.

It would have been strange if a boy who was so active as Ronald in playing off his pranks upon others, had himself wholly escaped from similar practical jokes. But he did not. One trick was played upon him, which annoyed him very much. Some one, he could not ascertain who, spread upon his seat a quantity of soft pitch, upon which he unsuspectingly sat. The sticky gum adhered so pertinaciously to his clothing, that he could not remove it, but through the day, whenever he attempted to make the slightest movement upon his seat, he found himself held fast by an invisible power.

When the morning session of the academy opened, Marcus was not a little surprised to discover that Otis was missing. He went to Ronald's seat and asked where he was.

"I do n't know" replied Ronald.

"Did n't he go with you to Mr. Bright's, this morning?" inquired Marcus.

"No, sir, I have n't seen him since I got up," replied Ronald.

"But have n't you any idea where he is?" continued Marcus.

"I do n't know where he can be, unless he's a-bed," said Ronald.

"A-bed this time of day! How can that be?" exclaimed Marcus.

Ronald made no further reply, and Marcus then questioned Kate, Jessie and Oscar, but none of them could say they had seen Otis, that morning. Meanwhile, Aunt Fanny was making quite as surprising a discovery at home, as Marcus made at school. She went up stairs, to take care of the boys' room, and found Otis asleep, and the room as dark as at night.

"Why, Otis Sedgwick! are you asleep yet?" exclaimed Aunt Fanny, shaking the boy by the shoulder. "Come, wake up! It's after nine o'clock."

"Is it this morning, or last night?" inquired the drowsy and bewildered boy, rubbing his eyes, as if to let the day-light into them.

Aunt Fanny pulled open the shutters, and the sun, two hours and a half high, came streaming in upon the bed, to the astonishment of Otis.

"This is one of Ronald's tricks, I suppose," said Aunt Fanny. "But he has carried the joke altogether too far. You are too late to go to school this forenoon."

"Well, this is a pretty piece of business, I do think," said Otis, who now began to comprehend the joke that had been played upon him.

Aunt Fanny withdrew, telling Otis she would go and prepare his breakfast. After waiting some time, as the boy did not appear, she again went to his room, to call him. She found him partly dressed, and crying with vexation because he could not find the rest of his apparel. With her aid, the missing articles were soon found, and Otis sat down to his breakfast, in not a very pleasant mood, about half-past nine o'clock.

Otis went to school in the afternoon. He at once informed Marcus of the cause of his absence, but he kept out of the way of Ronald, with whom he felt offended. At recess, Ronald determined to speak to Otis, and he did.

"Hullo, Otis," he said, "why did n't you come to school, this morning?"

Otis took no notice of the question, except to turn away from his persecutor.

"Sun did n't rise as early as common, did it?" continued Ronald, laughing.

Otis made no reply.

"Come, now," added Ronald, laying his arm over the shoulder of Otis, "do n't get mad with a fellow for a joke — it was all in fun, you know."

"It was fun to you, but it was n't to me," replied Otis, slipping away from under Ronald's arm, and leaving him alone.

Ronald felt rather sober after this decided rebuff. He began to realize that a joke carried too far, is no joke at all; the difficulty with which he moved about on his pitchy seat, helping him materially to this conclusion. After school, he walked home alone, in advance of the others, who, by the way, were discussing his conduct with much interest. Kate and Otis told how they had been served, and several other jokes of Ronald were related. All concurred in the opinion that the custom of "making fools" of each

other on the first of April, was a senseless one, and very liable to abuses. Still, Marcus said it was not worth while to get angry about such things, and he tried to make Otis forget the resentment which it was evident he felt towards Ronald.

On reaching his home, Marcus learned from his mother some facts in regard to Ronald's trick upon Otis, which made it even more serious than it at first appeared. In carrying it out, it appeared he had really been guilty of something that looked very much like disobedience and falsehood, and had fooled several others besides Otis. When spoken to, however, Ronald seemed unwilling to admit that he had done anything blameworthy, and was especially astonished when he was charged with doing violence to the truth. He defended himself against this latter charge with considerable ingenuity, contending that if any falsehood was told, Jessie was the guilty one.

"I think," said Marcus, after talking with him awhile, "we had better have a court to try this case, as it involves some important principles."

"Well, I'll agree to that," replied Ronald. "Give me a fair trial, and if I'm beat, I won't say a word."

A custom had been introduced into the family of occasionally holding a court to try offences of a peculiar nature. When there was some doubt as to the measure of blame due to an offender, or when it was uncertain to whom the blame principally belonged, or when important moral principles were involved in a wrong act, or when disputes arose about perplexing points, the affair was sometimes settled by resolving the family into a court to try the case. This was what Marcus now proposed to do; and, as Ronald agreed to it, the evening of the next day was appointed for holding the court, and all concerned were immediately notified, that suitable preparation might be made.

In these little courts, no attempt was made to imitate the cumbrous machinery, the solemn dignity, the slow and formal movements, or the "glorious uncertainty," which usually characterize the tribunals established by law. Instead of a long indictment, setting forth a simple act in all sorts of wicked shapes, and magnifying and multiplying it till it looked like a dozen huge crimes, stuck together, the court I am describing based their action on a simple complaint,

written in plain, unexaggerating language. They had no constable, sheriff, clerk or crier, because they did not need them. A judge, two lawyers, (one to prosecute and the other to defend the accused,) a jury, (usually consisting of two or three persons,) witnesses, and a prisoner, were all the functionaries necessary to this court. The law they administered was that "common law" written in every unperverted heart, and their statute book was the Bible.

The trial of Ronald commenced early on the evening appointed. Marcus presided as judge. Oscar was the prosecuting attorney. As the accused intended to conduct his own defence, no counsel appeared for him. Mrs. Page, Kate, and Jessie's brother Henry, who happened to be present, were the jury. Miss Lee, Jessie and Otis were summoned as witnesses.

After the court had come to order, the prosecuting attorney arose, and said that several complaints had been made against the accused, very similar in their character, all of them being for improper and unwarrantable jokes perpetrated on the first day of April. He thought, however, that the ends of justice would be sufficiently met by trying the prisoner for only one

of these offences. He then read the indictment, or complaint, which was drawn up with care, and was in the following form :

“COMPLAINT.

“I hereby charge Ronald D. Page with entering into an unjustifiable plot on the morning of the first day of April, 185—, to detain his room-mate, Otis Sedgwick, in his chamber until an unusual hour, which design he carried out by darkening the room, displacing and disarranging the clothing of said Sedgwick, and closing the door, contrary to his usual custom, thereby keeping said room-mate in his chamber until it was too late to go to school ; which act was against the peace, dignity and good order of the family.

“I also charge said Page with disobedience, in neglecting to call said Sedgwick, when told to do so by Miss Lee.

“I also charge said Page with being virtually guilty of falsehood, inasmuch as he deceived Miss Hapley by removing certain articles from the breakfast table, and allowed an erroneous statement, which she made in consequence, to go uncorrected.

“OSCAR PRESTON, *Pros. Att’y.*

“*Highburg, Vt., April 2, 185—.*”

A copy of this complaint had been given to Ronald in the morning, that he might know precisely what points he had got to meet. He at first doubted whether it would be right to plead not guilty to all the charges, as he admitted that he played the joke upon Otis, referred to in the first charge. But Marcus explained that while he admitted the *acts* specified, he might if he chose deny the bad *character* ascribed to them in the complaint. He said that if Ronald did not believe his April-fool trick upon Otis was "unjustifiable," and "against the peace, dignity and good order of the family," he had a moral as well as legal right to plead not guilty to the complaint. Accordingly, when the complaint was read in court, and the judge asked the accused whether he was guilty or not guilty, the reply was, "Not guilty."

The witnesses were now introduced. Otis first appeared, and related all that he knew about the trick that had been played upon him. After he had got through, Ronald put a few questions to him.

"Do you generally know what is going on when you are sound asleep?" inquired the accused.

"No," replied the witness.

"How, then, do you know that *I* did the mischief?"

"Because — because I *know* you did it."

"Did you *see* me do it?"

"No."

"Did you *hear* me?"

"No."

"Did you *smell* me?"

A titter ran through the room, which the judge promptly rebuked by calling out "Order!" The reply to the last question was not heard, and the accused told the witness he might take his seat, remarking, at the same time, to the prosecuting attorney :

"I do n't think you have made much out of him — why, he undertakes to tell what was going on when he was sound asleep!"

Aunt Fanny was the next witness. She testified to finding Otis asleep, late in the morning, and described the state of things in his room, at that time. She also related what took place in the kitchen, when she told Ronald to call Otis to breakfast. Jessie was then called to the stand, and corroborated a part of the testimony of Miss Lee.

The evidence for the prosecution all being in, the prisoner said he should summon no witnesses to rebut the testimony given, although he presumed he could call upon every person in the court-room, from the learned judge down to the witness who pretended to tell what took place when he was asleep, to testify to his (the prisoner's) good character, if necessary. He then reviewed the evidence, and pronounced it all guess-work. Certain things had been done. There was no proof that *he* did them, and he did not know why they should be so positive he was the offender.

"May it please your honor," interrupted the prosecuting attorney, "if the prisoner thinks there is any room for doubt, on that point, I can call several witnesses to prove that he has *confessed* that he did all that we have charged him with."

"If it please your honor," replied the accused, "I suppose I could claim that anything I may have said shall not be used against me. Am I not right?"

"Whatever the law or usage may be in other tribunals," replied the judge, "this court is of the opinion that any confession made by the defendant may be used as evidence against him, unless it can be shown

that he was influenced by fear, or a hope of gaining some end, in making the confession."

"Well," continued the accused, "I will save the prosecuting attorney the trouble of bringing forward any more witnesses. I merely wished to show him the flaw in the net in which he thinks he has caught me; but I had no idea of crawling off through such a small hole. No, your honor, I admit that I played an April-fool trick upon my young friend."

The accused then went on to justify himself, in a speech of considerable length, which was very attentively listened to. He took the ground that the custom of playing April-fool tricks was an old and almost universal one; that it was one of the established and inalienable rights of boys; that there is no harm in playing off a pleasant joke in a good-natured way; that he had no malice against Otis, and in reality did him no harm; that there was no excuse for his sleeping till after school-time, even if the room was darkened; that in removing Otis's plate from the breakfast table, he only made an April fool of Jessie; that it was not his business to contradict Jessie, and correct her errors; that he did not call Otis, because he sup-

posed Aunt Fanny did not expect him to, after what Jessie had said; and that he did not feel that he had been guilty of disobedience or falsehood, in anything he had done, in connection with this affair. He closed with an earnest appeal to the jury, beseeching them to judge him by his motives rather than his acts, and reminding them that it was better to err on the side of mercy than of severity.

The prosecuting attorney now arose, and made the closing plea. He set forth in vivid colors the provoking nature of the offence, and the loss of time, temper and school privileges which Otis had suffered in consequence of it. Even allowing that there is no evil in playing harmless practical jokes on the first day of April, he held that this was a very different affair. It was too serious a matter to be passed off as a joke. It was an offence against good order and good feeling. But he was ready to go farther than this, and condemn all kinds of April-fool tricks. It was a foolish custom, if it was an old one. As to boys having an "inalienable *right*" to make fools of each other, on any day of the year, as had been claimed by the defendant, he said the proposition need only be stated,

to be laughed at. There were serious evils connected with this fooling business, as was abundantly illustrated in the case under trial. It was very apt to be carried too far, and to degenerate into impudence, rowdyism, recklessness, revenge, etc. Besides, it begets lying. He believed there were more lies told among boys on April first than on any other day of the year. Lying is almost essential to the playing off of an April-fool hoax. Lies may be acted, as well as spoken; they may be implied, as well as expressed. Any attempt to deceive, is a falsehood.

"I would like to ask the learned counsel," interrupted Ronald, "whether I am guilty of falsehood, when I give my hens glass nest-eggs?"

This question produced some merriment in the room, and for a moment it seemed to stagger the attorney. He got over it, however, by saying that a falsehood could be told only to a rational being. A hen is not capable of lying, or of being lied to.

Ronald again interposed. He said he admitted that a hen could not tell a lie; but she could be deceived with a glass egg, just as he was sometimes deceived by lying boys. why, then, could she not be lied to, as well as he?

The prosecuting attorney appeared somewhat confused, for a moment, but he proceeded to say that this discussion had nothing to do with the case on trial, and he would thank the defendant not to interrupt him again with irrelevant matters. He then resumed his argument. He thought there could be no doubt that if we allowed another to make an erroneous statement in our hearing, innocently, and we did not correct it, we were not blameless; but if we had previously set a trap to mislead the person into this very false statement, we certainly were greatly to blame. He then took up the question of Ronald's disobedience, and argued that he was without excuse for neglecting to call Otis, when told to. In concluding, he said he had been informed that the accused had been guilty of similar offences, though in a milder degree, a year previous to this time, and had been faithfully warned against repeating them. Justice, both to himself and to the family, seemed to require that efficient means should be adopted to put a stop to such proceedings, and he called upon the jury to do their duty firmly, and not allow their verdict to be influenced by fear, favor, or a mistaken charity.

The judge now arose and charged the jury. He set forth the facts that had been proved against the accused, and stated in an impartial manner the questions which the jury were to consider. He said he did not consider it proper to offer them any instruction as to the moral law on which their decision must be based, as they were as well versed in that as he was himself. He closed by urging them to render an honest and impartial decision.

The jury now retired to another room, and the judge announced that the court would take a recess. Judge and prisoner, counsel and witness, now chatted together quite familiarly for a little while, until the jury returned, when the court was called to order, and the verdict announced, as follows :

“We find the prisoner guilty on all the charges; but as we are of opinion that he has erred through thoughtlessness rather than from malice, we recommend that as light a penalty be inflicted as in the opinion of the court will serve the ends of justice.”

The judge, who had probably anticipated such a verdict, and had decided in his mind what the penalty should be, now told the prisoner to arise, and proceeded to address him in these words :

“Ronald D. Pagē, you have been tried by a jury, and found guilty of taking unwarrantable liberties with your room-mate, and with being virtually guilty of disobedience and falsehood, that you might the better carry out your plot. The court concurs in the justice of this verdict, and also in the propriety of the recommendation of mercy that accompanies it. But the court is of opinion that while the sentence is tempered with mercy, it should be of sufficient severity to prevent a repetition of the offence. Its sentence, therefore, is, that on Wednesday next, at two o'clock in the afternoon, you be taken to your chamber, and stripped of your clothing.”

The judge here paused a moment, the prisoner's face fell, and there was a decided sensation throughout the room. Marcus continued :

“That you then be put to bed, and there remain for the space of four hours, or until six o'clock, when you shall be released. And the court appoints Mr. Preston an officer, to see that this sentence is faithfully carried out.”

So ended what was in after days memorable in the annals of the family as “the great April-fool case.”

The sentence was fully carried out, the next Wednesday afternoon, with the exception that, as Ronald pledged his honor to put himself to bed, and remain there for four hours, Oscar allowed him to perform that office for himself. The "judge" happened to peep into his chamber, an hour or two after, and was not a little surprised to find his prisoner sleeping as soundly, and snoring as complacently, as if going to bed at two o'clock were a very pleasant arrangement!



CHAPTER XI.

SCHOLARS.

THE preceptor of the academy, Mr. Upton, used to say a great deal to the scholars about the importance of good spelling, and was always sure to point out any sins against this virtue which he discovered in the various written exercises of the school. He said that even if a man was well educated in other respects, but deficient in this, his bad spelling would often cause him to be mistaken for an ignorant person. Occasionally, by way of enlivening the exercises of the school, and interesting the pupils in this important branch of study, Mr. Upton would allow them to have a "spelling match," as it was called. Sometimes the contest was between the girls, arranged on one side of the room, and the boys on the other. A leader was appointed on each side, to give out the words to his

or her regiment. A pretty hard lesson was selected, and the leaders, beginning at the heads of their respective bands, took turns in giving out the words. No waiting or hesitation was allowed, but if a scholar could not promptly spell the word given out, he had to return to his seat. The ranks were rapidly thinned out, and the band which retained the largest number, when the exercise closed, were the victors.

These contests became still more exciting, when, as it sometimes happened, the leaders were allowed to "choose sides." Selecting by turns any one they pleased from the whole school, they picked out the best spellers first, and so kept on till all the scholars were enlisted on one side or the other.

Though these spelling matches were greatly enjoyed by the scholars, and were profitable to them, too, they were liable to some objections, and for this reason, probably, were not often indulged in. On one occasion, when Jessie was one of the leaders, she chose Abby Leonard on her side, when her list was only one-fourth full. She did this, to save Abby the mortification of being left to the last, as she would otherwise have been ; for she was a notoriously bad speller,

and somebody had said of her, with more truth than kindness, that she ought to count only half of one, in a spelling match. The struggle proved to be a pretty hard one, and after the two bands had been reduced down to the best spellers, they were so equally balanced that it was for a time doubtful whether either would be able to claim a victory over the other. At length, however, one of Jessie's company missed a word, and the match was decided against them, as the time had come to dismiss the school. The next day, Jessie learned that under the excitement and disappointment of the moment, two or three of the scholars on her side had found much fault with her for choosing Abby instead of a good speller, whom she might have had, and thus gained the day. Thus, in doing an act of kindness to one, she had provoked censure from several of her associates. And, on reflection, she was led to doubt whether she did not deserve blame ; for ability to spell, and not favor, was the principle on which the leaders were expected to make their choice.

At the next spelling match, the leaders thought of nothing but getting the best spellers, and Abby sank to her natural level. She was almost the last one

called; and when her name *was* called, she turned a look of scorn upon the young man who conferred this tardy honor upon her, and refused to take her place. Mr. Upton whispered a few words to her, but evidently without changing her mind, for he told the scholars to go on without her. That was the last of "choosing sides" during that term. The preceptor said nothing about the affair, but this unhappy exhibition of temper probably led him to abandon an exercise that had been a favorite one with the scholars generally.

Jessie maintained a high rank as a scholar, although she labored under some disadvantages, no small portion of her time being occupied with her work at home, and her duties as assistant in the school-room. These disadvantages, however, were not so great as they seemed; for what she lost, on account of them, was made up to her in other ways. Those very obstacles to her success served as a spur, inciting her to effort, and leading her to appreciate better the advantages within her reach.

Some of the scholars thought Jessie must be peculiarly gifted, because her lessons were uniformly so

perfect. But this was not the case. Study was study, to her, and not play. It was not because she learned easily, but because she worked hard, that her recitations rarely fell below the required mark.

"I'd give anything in the world if I could have such a memory as you've got," said Abby Leonard to Jessie, one day.

"Why, do you think I've got a good memory?" inquired Jessie.

"Of course you have," replied Abby. "You couldn't learn your lessons so easily, if you had n't. And then only think how little time you have to study, too!"

"I think my memory is rather poor," resumed Jessie. "I get almost out of patience with myself, sometimes, it takes me so long to learn anything. If you knew how hard I work to get my lessons, you wouldn't think I learned easily. In fact, I should n't wonder if your memory was better than mine, after all."

"Why, Jessie Hapley, how absurd! — when everybody knows you've got such a splendid memory!" exclaimed Abby.

"Then everybody is mistaken," replied Jessie, "for my memory is no better than the average, if it is as good. What was that long story I heard you telling some of the girls, yesterday noon?"

"Oh, I was telling them the adventures of Lord Adolphus D'Orsay, the hero of a novel I read a few days ago," said Abby. "He's a beautiful character, I can tell you — tall, and handsome, and rich, and his father —"

"No matter about that, now," interrupted Jessie; "what I want to find out, is, how long it took you to commit that story to memory?"

"Commit it to memory?" inquired Abby, with manifest surprise. "You didn't suppose I committed that novel to memory, did you? Why, I only read it once — and I went through it like lightning, too, and skipped all the uninteresting parts, besides, I was dying so to see how it was going to end."

"And yet," added Jessie, "you could relate, several days after, a large part of this story, and give many minute particulars about the characters. I don't believe my memory would be equal to such a feat as that."

"Oh, well," said Abby, "that was only a story, and it's easy enough to remember stories. But take such a lesson as our class had this morning — that hateful list of irregular verbs — I can't learn it, and I won't try. I should think Mr. Upton would know better than to tell us to learn such a stupid mess of words — what good would it ever do us, if we did learn them?"

"I learned the list of irregular verbs two years ago, and I did not find it half so hard as I thought it would be," said Jessie. "I remember all about it, as well as though it was last week. I thought it was a hard lesson, and so I studied it just before I went to bed, and then repeated it over two or three times, after I was in bed."

"Why, is that a good way to learn a hard lesson?" inquired Abby.

"I think it is," replied Jessie, "and I've heard others say that if you want to remember words, it is a good rule to fix them in the memory just before you go to bed. They say the best way to teach a parrot to talk, is to darken his cage, and keep repeating the words he is to learn while he is going to sleep. I kept saying over the irregular verbs until I fell asleep,

and the next morning I found I knew them by heart, and I have n't forgotten them yet."

"Oh, well, that just proves what I said, that you've got a better memory than I have," added Abby.

"No, Abby, it proves no such thing," replied Jessie. "You say you can't learn the list, and you wont try; I said, I can learn it, and I will — and I did. That is all the difference between us. I have no doubt you could commit the list to memory without much trouble, if you would only think so, and would try. That's the secret of good lessons."

"I do n't believe I could learn that lesson, if I should study it a week — it's a long string of words, without any sense or reason, and I can't learn such things," said Abby.

"Oh, yes, you can learn it if you will only determine to do so," replied Jessie.

"But I *know* I never could learn it — it is n't in me," said Abby, and she declined further conversation on the subject by walking off.

Jessie was on the right track, in attributing the difference between her memory and that of Abby to a *will* and a *wont*. She might have carried the com-

parison still farther, and something like the following, I think, would have been the result :

THE GOOD AND THE POOR SCHOLAR.

JESSIE.

Her motto is, Learn all you can.

She makes sacrifices to obtain an education, and fully appreciates the privileges she enjoys.

She thinks much of the future benefit to be derived from her studies.

She makes it a rule to thoroughly master every task allotted to her, and to understand what she learns.

She diligently improves her time.

She concentrates her mind upon her studies.

Result. — Her lessons are perfect.

ABBY.

Her motto is, Get through as easily as possible.

Her privileges are themselves a burden and a hardship, and she longs to get rid of them.

She cares far less about future good than present ease.

She thoroughly masters nothing, and is satisfied if she can repeat the words of a lesson, without troubling herself about ideas.

She wastes many precious hours.

Her mind is seldom earnestly fixed on her studies.

Result. — Her lessons are failures.

It was by a diligent improvement of her time, and a concentration of her mind on her studies, that Jessie mainly owed her high standing in the academy.

When she studied, she studied in earnest. It is no easy thing to fix the mind attentively upon one subject, and exclude every thing else. Martin Luther says : " Let any one try how long he can rest on one idea he proposed himself, or take one hour and avow that he will tell me all his thoughts. I am sure he will be ashamed before himself, and afraid to say what ideas have passed through the head, lest he should be taken for a mad dog, and be chained." And to illustrate this, he relates an anecdote of St. Bernard, who once complained to a friend that he found it very difficult to pray aright, and could not even pronounce the Lord's prayer once without a host of strange thoughts. His friend was astonished, and gave it as his opinion that he could fix his thoughts on his prayer without any difficulty. Bernard offered him the wager of a fine horse, on condition he should commence forthwith. The friend commenced, " Our Father," etc., but before he had finished the first petition, it occurred to him, if he should gain the horse, whether he would also receive saddle and bridle. In short, he was so entangled in his own thoughts, that he had to quit, and give up the prize.

It should be added, that this difficulty, which every student encounters, can in a great measure be overcome, by early culture and discipline. The best scholars are those who can control and direct their thoughts, and keep them fixed upon a subject as long as they please. The extent to which this power may be acquired is wonderful. There is a school in New England in which many of the pupils have accomplished the feat of multiplying nine figures by nine figures, mentally, or "in the head;" and the teacher thinks any child of ordinary capacity can learn to do this.

Some of the scholars wondered that two girls so little alike as Jessie and Abby, should be such good friends as they seemed to be. The intimacy, however, appeared greater than it really was, because Abby, by her upstart ways and her bad temper, had alienated nearly all the other girls, and had no bosom friends among them. Jessie's forbearance and kindness had won her affection, and the poor drunkard's daughter, whom she at first treated with contempt, and then regarded with a patronizing air, she now looked upon as her superior, whose friendship was to be

prized. On the part of Jessie, it is true, there was no particular partiality for Abby. There was little, either in the manners or the character of the young scion of aristocracy, that was attractive, and if Jessie had not been guided by the golden rule, and influenced by a kindly heart, her intercourse with Abby would have been very slight.

Abby was a great novel reader. She eagerly devoured everything in the shape of fiction that she could lay her hands on. In fact, her reading was wholly confined to this class of books. She would often read an entire novel in one or two days, neglecting everything else, except attendance at school, until it was finished. This habit interfered so much with her studies, and was so manifestly injuring both her mind and heart, that Mr. Upton tried to induce her to break it up. He told her that her devotion to novels would destroy her taste for useful reading and study; would give her false views of life; would weaken her intellect, deaden her sympathy for real sorrow, and harden her heart; would corrupt her principles, and break down the distinction in her mind between vice and virtue, shame and glory; and would disincline

and unfit her for the duties of actual life. All his arguments and warnings, however, were of no avail. The spell was already so strongly upon her, that she could not, or would not, break from it, and her exploits, in the way of novel-reading, were limited only by the somewhat meagre supply which that small town afforded. She occasionally tried to tempt Jessie to read one of her favorite tales, but never succeeded. Jessie had no time to waste over such books, even had not her principles and inclination stood in the way of novel-reading.

CHAPTER XII.

A FEW BUSINESS MATTERS.

“JESSIE’S a first-rate hand to drive a bargain — you ought to have heard her beat Mr. Simpson down, this afternoon,” said Oscar, at the tea-table, one evening.

“I did n’t beat him down, nor ask him to take one cent less — he put his price down of his own accord,” replied Jessie.

“Oh yes, that’s the beauty of it,” retorted Oscar. “She didn’t say hardly anything, but she acted it out completely, and she got the dress for her own price. I call that the perfection of beating down. I’m going to get you to make my purchases, hereafter, Jessie; for you know folks say I’m extravagant, when I buy anything.”

“I think it would be a good plan for you to get

somebody to do your trading," replied Jessie. "You gave seventy-five cents for that flimsy cravat, last week, and I'll engage to buy the silk and make a better one for one-half the money."

"Oh well, don't say another word about *that*," replied Oscar, whose cravat speculation was not a very pleasant thing to dwell upon. "What can't be cured must be endured. But I won't get shaved in that way again, for I've engaged you to do my shopping. And remember you must beat them down just as you would for yourself."

"But I don't make a practice of beating the shopkeepers down, for myself," said Jessie. "If a man asks more for a thing than I can afford to give, I tell him so; and if he has a mind to offer it for less, very well, but if he does n't, I can't trade."

"Yes, you understand how to do it," said Oscar, with a chuckle.

"Do you call that beating a man down, Mrs. Page?" inquired Jessie.

"No, I think that is fair enough," replied Mrs. Page. "I don't approve of beating a man down below a fair price, on the one hand, and I don't

approve of giving more for an article than it is worth, on the other. I try to act on these principles, when I am trading. If I can't afford to pay a fair price for a thing, I conclude that I can't afford to buy it."

"That is just the way I feel," added Jessie. "But to tell the truth, I was almost ashamed to take that dress pattern, although I don't think I was to blame. It came to just nine shillings, and there was nothing else in the store cheaper, that suited me. But I could not afford to go over a dollar for a dress, and I told Mr. Simpson so. 'Oh,' he said, 'it was no matter about the money now — I could pay any time when I had it.' I told him I made it a rule never to run in debt for anything. Then he said I might have the dress for eight and three pence —"

"You mean a dollar and thirty-seven cents — we have no shillings and pence in our currency," interrupted Marcus, who always set his face against this common but very un-American way of reckoning.

"Yes, a dollar and thirty-seven," continued Jessie, "and then he said he'd take a dollar and a quarter, which was just what the goods cost him. But I told him I could not go over a dollar, and then he proposed

to split the difference, and let me have it for a dollar and nine pence — I mean a dollar and twelve cents. But the trimmings would make the price count up so, that I concluded I could n't go one cent over a dollar, and I started off, and got as far as the door-steps, when he called me back, and told me I might have it for a dollar. I had no idea at first that he would let me have it at that price, and I did n't ask him to take off a cent, nor think of beating him down; but I declare I felt really ashamed, when he called me back. If it cost him a dollar and a quarter, it seems mean for me to buy it for a dollar. What do you think of it, Mrs. Page — did I do wrong?"

"No, under the circumstances I can't say that you did wrong," replied Mrs. Page. "If you could not afford to give over a dollar, it was right for you to stop at that mark; and if Mr. Simpson fell of his own accord to that price, that was his own affair. If you had had plenty of money, or if you had coaxed him down to a dollar, the case would have been different."

"Merchants sometimes find it for their advantage to sell an article for less than it costs, rather than not dispose of it," observed Marcus. "That was probably

the case with Mr. Simpson. Perhaps the dress pattern was the last of a lot."

"No, it was from a new lot, just received," replied Jessie.

"Then," continued Marcus, "perhaps he thought you might go somewhere else and buy, and he should lose your trade; or perhaps he was a little short for money; or perhaps he knew you fancied the dress, and in the kindness of his heart he determined you should have it, at some price or other. He had a reason, no doubt, for doing as he did."

"Well, I can't bear to be thought mean," continued Jessie; "but poor folks have to put up with many things they dislike, and that is one of them."

"There was nothing mean in doing as you did," said Miss Lec, "and I do not believe Mr. Simpson thought so. I don't approve of driving a hard bargain, any more than I do of paying extravagant prices for things. There is a golden mean between the two, which honest people ought to seek after. I think you were wise in refusing to run in debt. Spending money before we get it is one great source of extravagance, and keeps many people poor all their lives."

"Everybody ought to get out of debt just as quick as they can, had n't they?" inquired Ronald.

"Certainly," said Miss Lee.

"Then, mother, I wish you would let me have fifty cents—I want to pay my debts," continued Ronald.

"Your debts! Pray what do you owe?" inquired Mrs. Page.

"I owe a boy fifty cents, and he's dunned me for it two or three times," replied Ronald.

"Who is he, and how came you to owe him fifty cents?" inquired Mrs. Page.

"The fellow is Joe Baker," replied Ronald. "I lost my Reader, about a month ago, and as he did n't use his, he wanted to sell it to me, so I bought it."

"How came you to lose your Reader?" inquired Marcus.

"I don't know—I never could tell what became of it," replied Ronald.

"Why did n't you come to me or to Marcus, if you wanted a new one?" inquired Mrs. Page.

"I did n't like to—I thought you would think I was careless, to lose my old one," was the reply.

"And so you ran into debt, with nothing to pay,

trusting I would foot the bill some time or other?" said Mrs. Page.

"I thought I could sell some maple sugar, and raise the money, but ——" the family ate up nearly all the sugar, he intended to say, but did not.

"When did you agree to pay Baker?" inquired Marcus.

"Oh, he said I might pay him any time when I had the money," replied Ronald.

"And he has already asked you for it two or three times?" inquired Marcus.

"Yes, sir, he duns me every time he sees me," said Ronald.

"You are experiencing some of the pleasures of being in debt," remarked Miss Lee.

"I hope it will be a good lesson to you," said Mrs. Page.

"Will you let me have the fifty cents?" inquired Ronald.

"I will talk with you about that, some other time," replied Mrs. Page, and the subject was dropped.

Mrs. Page and Marcus, after talking over Ronald's financial embarrassment, concluded it would be better

not to relieve him at once, but to let him bear the burden of his debt until he could earn the money to pay it up. They thought that by adopting this course the transaction would make a deeper impression on his mind, and perhaps serve as a useful lesson to him as long as he lived. Joseph Baker, who held the demand against Ronald, attended the academy, and Marcus, after consulting him, effected a settlement on the following terms: Ronald gave his promissory note to Joseph for the amount due, running three months from the date of the purchase; and Joseph, in return, gave a receipt in full for the demand. Ronald's note ran as follows:

Highburg, March 12, 185-

50 cents.

Three months after date, for value received, I promise to pay to Joseph Baker, or order, Fifty Cents, with interest.

RONALD D. PAGE.

As the note was dated back one month, Ronald had but two months in which to raise the money. He objected to putting the note on interest, the amount was so small; but Marcus told him this was the proper way to do, and added that possibly the note

would not be paid when due, in which case the interest would be larger.

The receipt Ronald received was as follows :

Highburg, March 12, 185-.

RONALD D. PAGE,

To JOSEPH BAKER, Dr.

For one second-hand "Reader,"

- - - - 50 cents.

Received payment by note,

JOSEPH BAKER.

Marcus told Joseph that if he should happen to want the money at any time before the note was due, to bring it to him, and he would "discount" it — that is, give him the money for the note ; in which case Ronald would owe the debt to Marcus, instead of to Joseph. This transfer could be made, because the note was payable "to Joseph Baker, *or order* ;" and all Joseph would have to do, to make it the property of another, would be, to write his name across the back of the note.

Jessie's rule, never to buy anything she could not pay for at the time, is a wise one, for a person situated as she was. She had another excellent business habit, which all might imitate with profit. She kept a strict account of all her money transactions. Every

cent she received or expended was noted down in a little book kept for the purpose. She thus cultivated habits of order and economy, had the satisfaction of knowing just where her money went, and could always tell what any particular article cost her, and how long it lasted, by turning to her book.

But Jessie's account book was after all a small affair. The columns of dollars and cents, on both the Cr. and Dr. side, increased slowly; for the reason that dollars and cents were a very scarce article with her. The little pittance which her mother was able to spare her, was all the money that passed through her hands, and this, with strict economy and self-denial, was barely sufficient to clothe her decently. No one knew how sadly she was sometimes straitened for money, for she never complained of her many disappointments and deprivations.

But though Jessie did not complain, she often sighed in secret for the day when she should be free from dependence and poverty — when she should become a help, instead of being a burden, to her mother. A door of deliverance opened to her sooner than she anticipated. One day, on returning from

school, she found her uncle Morrison at the house, waiting to see her. He lived about forty miles distant, and as he had but seldom visited Highburg, when Jessie's parents were living there, his appearance was quite unexpected. He remained with the family over night, and in the evening explained to his niece the object of his visit. About six months previous to this time, he had buried his only child, a daughter. His wife had been very low-spirited ever since, and both of them deeply felt their loss. They now wished to adopt Jessie in place of the lost child, receiving her into their home as a daughter, and lavishing upon her the care and affection of parental hearts. They knew something of Jessie's amiable disposition, varied accomplishments, and excellent character, and judged that she was not unworthy of the great favor they sought to confer upon her.

Jessie did not instantly accept the offer, with profuse thanks, as Mr. Morrison expected she would, but she promised to give her answer the next morning. It was no trifling struggle which she passed through that night, in coming to a decision on her uncle's proposition. If she accepted it, she would at once

be delivered from griping poverty, would cease to be an expense to her mother, and would enjoy the comforts and advantages of a permanent home. If this had been all, she might have easily decided the question. But there was something more to be taken into the account. Mr. Morrison, who was a large, jovial and good-hearted, though rather coarse and uncultivated man, kept the tavern in the village where he lived. Jessie had once visited him, and had a vivid recollection of his house, which was pervaded from top to bottom with a mingled flavor of alcohol and tobacco, and was the favorite resort, especially during the evening and the Sabbath, of a set of idle and not very prepossessing men, whose low and profane conversation sometimes penetrated beyond the piazza and the bar-room. Mr. Morrison, though apparently an honest, well-meaning man, seemed to have no religious principle. He was not a church-goer, but spent the Sabbath pretty much as he did other days. He relished the coarse jest, and the story spiced with vulgarity or profaneness, as much as did any of the idlers who frequented his house; and Jessie had a

suspicion that he slyly relished his own liquors, too, but of this she was not positive.

Such was the man who proposed to become a father to Jessie. He was doubtless kindly disposed, had ample means, and would do all for her that he had promised. His wife was an excellent woman, with whom Jessie would have esteemed it a privilege to live. The temptation was strong, but the next morning Jessie was prepared to give a firm and decided answer to her uncle. She told him she thought she had better remain where she was — that she was with kind friends, and should soon be fitted to support herself by teaching. Mr. Morrison was surprised at her decision, and tried to reason her out of it, pointing out the advantages she would enjoy, if she went to live with him. Mistaking the ground of her refusal, he told her that if she did not wish to be dependent upon any one, he would give her a first-rate education, after which she might have the privilege of supporting herself by teaching, if she preferred. But his arguments and persuasions all failed, and he was obliged to go home without her. He was not without hope, however, that she would yet “come to her senses,” as

he expressed it — for he evidently thought she was beside herself in rejecting such a fine offer ; and he told her he would come for her at any time within a few weeks, if she would write. She did write, to thank her aunt for her kindness, and to express her regret that she felt compelled to decline the liberal offer, and that was the end of the matter. She preferred poverty and toil, in her present position, rather than money and ease, coupled with influences that might work disastrously upon her character and her happiness.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW GAME.

THE "Home Wreath" continued to make its appearance promptly every Saturday afternoon, and had of late acquired new popularity, by an attractive feature it had adopted. It was now illustrated, almost every week, by original drawings, usually executed by Miss Lee or Jessie. These sketchings were small, and not very elaborate, but they served to give a new interest to the sheet. They were entitled "*Family Portraits*," and at first were confined to likenesses of creatures kept on the farm or in the house. Rover, the faithful spaniel, was sketched to the life, and so was Goldy, the cat. The two horses, Charley and Kittie, Cora, the calf, and a hen with a brood of chickens, were also honored with places in the gallery. No one thought of extending this collection of

portraits beyond the domain of the brute portion of the family, until, one Saturday afternoon, the whole house was startled by an editorial announcement in the "Wreath," to the effect that "the portrait of one of its contributors would be given next week." The editor positively refused to let any one into the secret, and no one else appeared to know anything about the matter. Curiosity was excited almost to a painful degree, among the young folks, and all put on and wore for a week their most amiable looks, each one anxious to appear as pretty as possible on paper, if he or she were the favored individual. After a week



of suspense, Saturday came, and with it came the "Wreath." Kate got first possession of the sheet, and as she opened it, and the annexed "portrait" disclosed itself, la-

belled "*Our Sociable Contributor*," there was a peal

of laughter from the other members of the family who were peeping over her shoulders, that woke the echoes under the old roof. Marcus was of course the hero of the picture. He was an attentive reader of the news of the day, and had a habit of getting so absorbed in the paper as sometimes to become oblivious to remarks addressed to him, so that the boys used to say the newspaper made him deaf. The likeness was unanimously voted a capital one, inasmuch as there was no mistaking who it was intended for.



A week or two after this, the portrait of another contributor was promised, and a lively sensation was again awakened. Expectation was on tip-toe until the next number of the "Wreath" appeared, when a pair of boy's legs on stilts, labelled "*Our High-minded Con-*

tributor," sent another merry shout through the house.

A mania for stilts just then prevailed among the boys, and Ronald, for several days, had scarcely deigned to walk upon the earth, but "intent on high designs," went awkwardly hobbling round on two long poles, to the amazement of the cows and chickens, and somewhat to the risk of his limbs and trousers. Of course, nobody could mistake *this* portrait; but Ronald seemed much disappointed because the artist (whether Aunt Fanny or Jessie, he could not find out,) did not finish it up, to his full length. And, really, it was provoking to come so near being immortalized, and yet miss it.

But Ronald's mind was not altogether taken up with stilts, April-fool hoaxes, or maple sugar speculations. He had been for several weeks, and was at this very time, at odd moments, engaged on a literary enterprise of considerable magnitude, for a boy but half-way into his thirteenth year. He let Jessie, alone, into the secret, and received from her some useful suggestions and assistance; and a paragraph from her pen in the "Wreath," was the first announcement of the matter to the rest of the family. The paragraph was as follows:

“A NEW PLEASURE.—We learn that a young member of our family will in a few days issue, in manuscript, a new and very amusing game of transformations, upon which he has been engaged for some time. We predict that it will prove quite popular with the young folks. Besides the amusement it will afford, it has a peculiar feature which will transform it at pleasure into a puzzling and useful exercise for the intellect. Our readers will probably know more about it, before the next number of the ‘Wreath’ appears. J.”

Immediately on this announcement, there was great inquiry about the “new pleasure,” and Ronald was compelled to produce his game, the moment it had received the finishing touches. As this game will perhaps amuse my young readers, I shall copy it here, though it is rather long. At the end of Peter’s “story,” will be found a list of phrases, which, before playing the game, should be copied off, each upon a separate slip of card or paper.* One person should be selected to read the story aloud, and the cards should be distributed among the rest of the company.

* This game may be procured of the publishers in separate form, and put up in a neat paper box.

Whenever the reader comes to a blank in the narrative, he should look to some one of the company, who must immediately read aloud the uppermost card in his pile; and so the game proceeds to the end. Of course the story will read differently every time the game is tried, for the transformations it is capable of are infinite. No, not exactly infinite, which means without limits; but it would take many lines of figures to express the precise number; as any reader who has studied arithmetic as far as permutation can easily satisfy himself. This game is called the "Game of Transformations."

There is another game which Ronald called the "Game of Literary Patchwork," that may be played with the same cards. One person reads the story, as in the other game, and the company, instead of taking the cards hap-hazard, select at each pause one that they suppose will fit the sentence. If the match proves in any case incongruous or absurd, the reader may be empowered to exact a forfeit from the offender.

It should also be noticed that this is not merely a game to amuse an idle hour. It is also a "Literary

Puzzle," designed to exercise and sharpen the wits ; for it is so arranged that it can be put together so as to make sense, from beginning to end. There is a particular place for each phrase, but it will call into exercise some ingenuity, judgment and carefulness, to give to each "Jack" its own appropriate "Gill." It will, however, be a profitable exercise, and, I think, will repay the young reader for the attempt, even if he should not be perfectly successful.

Now for the game :

PETER CODDLE'S TRIP TO NEW-YORK.

Mr. Peter Coddle, of Hogginsville, on reaching the mature age of eighteen, was profoundly impressed with the idea that he needed a larger field in which to develop his powers, and make his fortune. So, one fine morning, having dressed himself in his new Sunday suit, and tied up his old clothes in a cotton handkerchief, he bade adieu to the old folks, and with high hopes in his heart, and about twenty-five dollars tucked away in his pocket, he set out for the city of New-York.

A few days after, to the great surprise of all Hogginsville, Peter suddenly re-appeared, in a very dirty and shabby suit, and with an anxious and wo-begone

countenance. He was evidently in a very excited state of mind, and gave a most extraordinary account of his adventures. Meeting-houses and saw-mills, thunder-claps and three-legged stools, salt fish and bull-frogs, were so strangely jumbled together in his mind, that he apparently could not distinguish one from the other. The 'squire said he had undoubtedly been drugged with stupefying poisons, by some villain in that great and wicked city of New-York. The doctor shook his head, and said he exhibited symptoms of a certain disease with a learned name, sufferers from which were accustomed to transpose their words and sentences in laughable ways; and he recommended "a good honest dose of calomel," as the best thing for him. Others thought the unfortunate young man had gone crazy; but all finally agreed that it was possible he had been drinking something stronger than country well-water. Which of these theories was the true one, I shall not undertake to decide, but will hasten to tell you his story, just as he related it to the wondering Hogginsvillians:

PETER'S STORY.

Well, boys, you know I streaked it off a-foot bright and early Monday morning, for the Cranktown railroad depot. I had all my baggage tied up in It was n't very heavy, you know, for there was n't any-

thing in it but, and, and, and But by-and-by I began to grow sort of tired, and just then there came along riding in something that looked like So I sung out, "Give us a ride, will ye?" says I; and says he, "Yes, jump in," says he, as civil as So in I jumps, and then we travelled, I tell you. Why, we went like Says I, "She's running away, aint she?" says I. Says he, "No, she's as steady as, if you know how steady that is," says he.

Well, just then started up suddenly from near the road, and frightened the mare like all possessed. She took the bits in her mouth, and ran like down a tremendous long hill. We met, and, and driving; but we got by them all without rubbing a hair. But just then, come jumping out of, and sprung right at the mare's head. Well, you see that made her shy one side, and plump we went right against, that knocked us all into And such a sight as there was, you never did see. The man had in his cart, and, and, and, besides The cart was smashed into flinters and everything was scattered round in; and the horse with the shafts was streaking it off like, towards Cranktown depot.

Well, after I found out I was n't killed, I jumps up, and says I, "Why, you, this is a bad fix, is n't it, now? I declare, I never saw before, did you?" says I. Says he, "Oh dear," says he, "I've sprained, and broke, and tore a hole in big enough to drive through," says he. Says I, "That's easily mended," says I; "come, let's pick up the pieces, and make the best of" But the old fellow would n't stir a peg, but lay as still as, and all he said was, that it was n't of any use to cry for, or anything else that could n't be helped. So after awhile I told him I must be on my taps, or I should miss the cars, and I'd rather give than do that.

So I picks up my bundle, and takes for a walking stick, and streaks it off for Cranktown depot as fast as could carry me. I got there half an hour before the cars did, and as I was as hungry as, thinks I I'll treat myself; so I went into, and bought, and, and washed 'em down with Pretty soon the cars came scooting along, and I got aboard and settled myself down on; and the way we rattled off towards New York was n't particularly slow, I tell you.

We flew like, and I got a squint at lots of wonderful things, but could n't stop to examine them.

There was with perched right on one corner of it; and a great stone house, that had a roof that looked something like upside down; and another monstrous big house, with hundreds of windows, that had standing all alone out-doors. And I saw cutting grass with ; and sawing wood with ; and a big red-headed woman licking right out in the yard; and some youngsters driving that was tackled into ; and a dog with tied to his tail; and lots of other curious sights, too numerous to mention.

By-and-by I happened to look up, and there was a dandified little fellow in the car, about as big round as , and with on his lip, who had a quizzing glass up to his eye, and was staring right at me, just as though I was Thinks I to myself, what's sauce for , is sauce for So I out with an old rusty key that I found one day in the stomach of , and putting the round part up to my eye, I began to quiz the little dandy through it. He looked as cross as , but I didn't care, so I puckered up my face as solemn as , and stared as hard as I could.

Well, pretty soon the folks around began to get wind of the fun, and looked as smiling as One fat man, who sat opposite, holding in one hand

., and in the other, snickered right out, and quieted himself by taking; and a young woman who had in her arms, which she was trying to get to sleep, laughed so that she had to stuff into her mouth. The little dandy now looked as savage as, and pretty soon he got up and strutted off like into another car; and then I put my quizzing glass away, laid back in my seat, and took a good snooze, with for a pillow.

I do n't remember how long I slept, but I expect I had a pretty considerable nap, for I did n't wake up for ever so long, and I should n't then, only came along, with on his back, which he poked in my face. I jumped up, and was going to give him, but he said it was, and he did n't mean to, and he asked my pardon as polite as So I told him there was no harm done, and we'd let it pass for

Well, we kept on travelling like, and towards night we got to New York. I knew we were there, because the houses got to be as thick as, and the folks were thicker still. Pretty soon the cars stopped, and all hands rushed out helter skelter, like after the enemy; and such a scrabbling, and yelling, and grabbing and punching as there was, I guess you never did see. One great two-

fisted fellow, with on his back, ran into me like , and almost knocked me into An old woman who wore , and who had for baggage and , besides in her hand, threatened to call the police, because I offered to help carry her traps. A little dirty-faced boy, with in the leg of his trousers, had that he wanted to sell, but I told him I could n't trade. Then he wanted to know how I'd swap, and said he'd trade for , or , or I thought he was poking fun at me, and so I walked off; but as I turned to go, I thought I heard him say something about

Just then some music struck up in a corner of the depot, that sounded for all the world like giving a concert, and I went to see what it was. There was a man whose face was all covered with hair, singing, and playing on There was a boy, too, who was playing on something that sounded like They gave us , and then they struck up , and then the boy passed round his cap for a contribution. One man put in ; another dropped in ; and a rogue of a boy threw in something that looked like

Well, about that time I looked up, and caught the eye of a well-dressed gentleman with , who was standing close by. His head was as smooth and

slick as , and he looked as nice as though he were just out of He was in mourning, for he had on his hat, and appeared dreadful solemn. Says he, "My friend," says he, taking me aside, "I suppose you wish to find of the right sort. I suppose you've heard," says he, "about the rascally tricks that are played off here upon strangers; but you've no idea how many sharpers always stand ready to fleece Why," says he, "there are three or four of the rascals watching you, in that crowd, like so many cats lying in wait for , and that's the reason I took you aside. If you want a good cosy home," says he, "where you will be out of the reach of these sharks, and where you can have anything you call for, from to or , just come along with me to my boarding-house. You see," says he, "I aint exactly , but I go about trying to do what little good I can in my own humble way," says he; and then he spouted off some poetry, but I can't remember but one verse. It was something like this:

"A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion, or ,
Has often healed the heart that's broken,
And made"

Says I, as soon as I could get a word in edgewise,

"You're just the man I want to see," says I; "but I hope they don't charge too much down to your boarding-house, for you see I have n't got but just in my pocket, and I sha'n't have anything more till I earn it," says I. Says he, "Oh don't say anything more about that," says he; "such sordid thoughts are enough to curdle Come along, and you'll be provided for till you can do better," says he.

So we walked along together, and he talked like a book about He spoke about crushing his heart, and said the world had lost all its charms to him, and had extinguished the light of his life. He didn't say exactly what the matter was, but I thought he'd lost some of his relations, or I asked him where he preached, for I concluded he must be a minister; but he said he enjoyed such poor health, that he had to give up his parish. He said he was troubled with , and his stomach was so weak that he often had to dine on and He said he was also afflicted with in his head, and had great trouble from that had settled on his lungs.

Well, we chatted together just like , until we came to his boarding-house. It was a pretty stylish place, I tell you, and I began to think a fellow ought to have , to afford to live there. He took me into a nice little room, all cool and shady.

There was a picture of on the wall, and an image of sitting on the mantel-piece, just as natural as life. I sat down on , and the man went to the closet, and I heard him pouring something from a bottle. Pretty soon he brought out on two glasses of something that looked real good. Says he, "A man ought to wet his mouth," says he, "after riding all day on , especially when the weather's as hot as 't is to-day. But as a friend to you," says he, "I can't advise you to drink much of our water, at first—you know it might not agree with you—it sometimes acts as in the stomach of It's splendid water," says he; "we Yorkers wouldn't take for it, and I prefer it to anything the art of man ever concocted; but then you've got to get used to it gradually, you know. Now," says he, "just taste of this—it's some of our temperance cordial, made out of the pure nectar of We're all temperance folks here," says he,— "never have anything in the house stronger than"

So he took one glass, and drank it down, and I emptied the other pretty quick, I tell you, for I was as dry as Then he went down stairs, to order supper, and I took up a book that was full of splendid pictures, and began to look at them. There was a view of fighting with , and a picture of holding , and a likeness of

. , and a portrait of , and a picture of , and another of perched on the top of , whistling Hail Columbia to all the world.

But pretty soon I begun to feel sort of queer. First I felt creeping over my head, like Then it seemed as though there were squirming about in my brain. Then I began to feel queer down in my stomach. I thought I'd swallowed , and , which rattled so every time I stirred, that I could n't go to sleep. My legs, too, did n't seem right—I thought I'd been changed into I did get to sleep, though, after awhile, and then such a dream as I had! I dreamt that the table was spread for supper, and covered with everything you could think of. There was , smoking hot; and , big enough for a whole board of aldermen; and , with all the fixin's; and , that made my mouth water; and , raw; and , of the tallest kind; and , such as we used to have at grand-ma'am's; and , fried brown and crispy. But I can't remember now half the good things there were on the table.

Well, as true as I'm a live man, I did n't wake up again till the clock struck the next morning. I was sort of confused, you know, for I could n't find my hat and coat, nor my bundle of clean clothes, and

instead of my new boots, I had on the remnants of , all split out at the sides. Pretty soon a fellow, who was dressed something like , stuck his head in the door. "Hullo, friend," says I, "can you tell me where the minister is?" "The what?" says he, looking as puzzled as though had got half way into his head, and then stuck fast. Says I, "The minister—that city missionary that boards here, and has got ; I come along from the cars with him last night," says I. That made the fellow laugh right out, and his eyes shined like in a dark night. But pretty soon he cooled off a little, and put into his mouth; and then he sat down on , and said he was , and asked me to tell him all about my adventures in New York. So I told him the whole story, but I tell you I trembled all over, and my muscles felt as flabby as , for you know I began to think I'd got into , of some sort or other; and began to come over me, I tell you.

Well, the man sat just as cool as , and heard it all, and then says he, looking me right in the eye, says he, "Coddle, you're green—dreadful green. You've fallen among thieves, like , and got thoroughly cleaned out," says he. I began to shake like Says he, "Your 'city missionary' was one of those very sharpers that he cautioned you

against — the smooth-tongued villain! He decoyed you into his den, and got you as drunk as,” says he; but that was n’t true, I’d have you to know, for I did n’t drink a drop of anything but the temperance cordial. “Well,” says the man, “after you was drunk enough, he robbed you of your money and clothes, and then chucked you into, for the police to take care of; and here you are in the police station, arrested for drunkenness,” says he.

When I heard that, I declare it was just as if had hit me right over the head. “O, dear me,” says I, “what shall I do?” and I burst right out into, for you know the poison stuff made me as weak as; and besides, I had in my head, that almost drove me crazy. Well, the policeman said in the first place I must have something to eat; so he went out and got me and Then, as my coat and hat were gone, he hunted up for me and, to take their place. My trousers were badly torn, too, and he got me to mend ’em. So, after I’d got fixed up a little, I went out with him to see if I could find the house where I stopped. But I had, and was weak in the joints, and could n’t walk very well. So, after trotting round half an hour, with beating on our heads, he said I’d better go to the dépôt, and take the first train for home. I told him I had n’t

got anything in my pocket but and , to pay the fare. He said he'd fix that. So he went with me to the dépôt, and got a free ticket, which he gave me, with ; and the way I left that city was n't slow, I tell you. And as soon as ever I came in sight of father's piggery and cow-sheds, and saw bobbing round among the cows, and Asa coming down the road with for the pigs, and heard Touser barking up a tree, and thought of the hour when ma'am gave me , I declare I burst right out into "Home, sweet home," my heart was so full.

And now I tell you, boys, I'm going to settle down on , and raise , and try and cultivate , and establish for myself , and see if I can't be , as well as other folks. But if anybody here wants to know what is, or is anxious to see with his own eyes, and to pay well for the sight, too, out of his own pocket, I'd just advise him to go to New York as soon as possible. And I guess my advice is worth something, if you do get it for nothing ; for you see I've lost all my money and new clothes, and got nothing in exchange but [*read all the cards that remain.*]

PHRASES TO SUPPLY THE BLANKS.

A broken jackknife.	Two lame legs.
A flock of crows.	A white cat.
A carpenter's chest.	An immense pan-dowdy.
A pinch of snuff.	A grand palaver.
A humbug.	A great toe.
A new idea.	A great fool.
This, that, and the other.	A load of hay.
A bureau drawer.	The elephant.
A dancing-master.	A crust of bread.
A cake saloon.	A sick calf.
A gander.	A tin kitchen.
A good character.	A red moustache.
Something green.	A fiddler.
An old bandanna.	A stiff knee.
A streak of lightning.	A cornfield.
A quarter of beef.	Two-and-three-pence.
A charcoal-wagon.	A one-eyed man.
A bad cold.	A cocked hat.
A vast oyster stew.	A liberty pole.
A bird.	Some valuable experience.
Somebody.	A stack of fat lobsters.
A mowing machine.	A great sorrow.
A dishcloth.	A cup of coffee.
A pair of old pantaloons.	A quiet conscience.
A yellow dog.	A gridiron railroad.
A bucket of soft soap.	An Irishman.
A contented mind.	A drove of cattle.
A house a-fire.	Such a pretty kettle of fish.
Daddy Longlegs.	A pair of cotton socks.
A thousand flowers.	A dark shadow.
A three-legged stool.	A quart of caterpillars.
A few old clothes.	A great hole.

An old brass key.
Yankee Doodle.
A dreadful pain.
A pair of green spectacles.
A cucumber.
A string of onions.
A clap of thunder.
Half a pair of scissors.
A soldier.
Half a peck of dried beans.
A telegraph despatch.
A velvet sofa.
A yoke of steers.
A bad scrape.
A basket of chips.
Half a dozen doughnuts.
An old owl.
A flood of tears.
Balaam's ass.
An old coat.
A tub of butter.
A small boy.
A bad matter.
The milk of human kindness.
A heap of pancakes.
A boarding-house.
A little fiddle.
A Frenchman.
A peeled onion.
Half a dozen bundles
A stick of candy.
A young earthquake.
A mint of gold.
A salt fish.

A mouse.
Just nothing at all.
A couple of lightning bugs.
A piece of putty.
A dose of salts.
A lightning express.
A handful of peanuts.
A Dutch farmer.
A set of false teeth.
A roast ox.
A liver complaint.
A long-legged fellow.
Something else.
A big meeting house.
A heavy weed.
A pumpkin-vine trumpet.
A tear.
The middle of next week.
A small waiter.
A blackbird fricasee.
A brass button.
A unicorn.
A pair of tongs.
A pair of old brogans.
Nine rats in a stocking.
A swarm of bees.
A litter of pups.
A patent boot-jack.
A one-horse saw-mill.
Potatoes and cabbages.
A dilapidated straw hat.
A big chimney.
A stuffed pig.
The American eagle.

A rusty horse-shoe.
A pocket full of rocks.
An Indian squaw.
A smoked herring.
Sally's baby.
A blue cotton umbrella.
A sheet of fancy gingerbread.
A hickory sapling.
A spare seat.
A thousand of bricks.
A sloop load of clams.
A big iron pot.
Something or other.
A goose.
A bob-tailed donkey.
A sheet of last year's buns.
A friend sincere.
A three-cent piece.
Fourteen handboxes.
A city missionary.
A starving bear.
A hot sun.
A bunch of posies.
A gentleman from the country.
Two buckets of swill.
An old handcart.
A great curiosity.
Some serious reflections.
A snapping turtle.
A policeman.
A pocket handkerchief.
A pound of wooden nutmegs.
Twenty-three dollars.
A sweet potato.

A new comer.
A cup of green tea.
A crying baby.
A sea of turtle soup.
A tow-headed boy.
An unfortunate accident.
Old dog Tray.
A dozen bull-frogs.
A mammoth cooking-stove.
Polly's old bonnet.
A bramble bush.
Some good advice.
A fishing pole.
Widow Buck's cow.
A glass of ginger beer.
General confusion.
A punch.
A needle and thread.
A blind alley.
A chipmuck.
The old homestead.
A bad liver.
An ivory-headed cane.
A parting blessing.
A handful of crackers.
Three heavy trunks.
A tall steeple.
A strange sensation.
A cock turkey.
Twelve dozen eggs.
A hippopotamus.
An old newspaper.
An old linen sack.
A sore head.

A chaw of tobacco.	St. George and the dragon.
A procession of cockroaches.	A butcher's wagon.
A Patagonian chief.	These new trousers.
Two old cronies.	A little spilt milk.
An Egyptian mummy.	Two shirts and a dickey.
A big stone.	A meat-axe.
An old setting hen.	Two leather shoe-strings.
Something strange.	A stiff leg.

CHAPTER XIV.

JUST OUT OF JAIL.

FOUR months in the county jail, was the sentence passed upon Sam Hapley, Jessie's oldest brother, for a robbery which he committed in a neighboring town. Sam entered upon his imprisonment during the last week of the year, and his sentence had now expired. Those were four very long and weary months to the boy-prisoner, but he could scarcely realize the change they had brought about in his once happy home. Since the key first turned upon him in his little cell, his youngest brother, the flower and pet of the household, had been carried to his long home, and was soon followed by his father, who met with an awful fate one winter's night, while he was stupefied with liquor. The rest of the family had been scattered, strangers gathered around the fireside where

they used to meet, and not one of them could now claim a home.

A few days before Sam's release from jail, Jessie wrote to him an affectionate letter, inviting him, in behalf of Mrs. Page and Marcus, to come and see them, before going elsewhere, and promising him a kind reception. His mother had also written to him, informing him that she had the promise of a good situation for him on a farm, in the town where she was living, and urging him to come to her at once, on his discharge from jail. Sam did not reply to either of these letters; but the day after the expiration of his sentence, just as the academy bell was ringing for the afternoon session, a little boy put into the hands of Jessie a note, which he said a strange young man, whom he met in the woods, had asked him to deliver. It was faintly written with a lead pencil, and was dirty and crumpled; but she soon ascertained that it was from Sam, and that it contained a request for her to meet him, that afternoon, at a certain retired spot on the banks of Round Hill Pond. It also apprised her that she must come alone, if she wished to see him.

Jessie at once got excused from her afternoon

duties, and proceeded to the spot indicated in the note. She seated herself on a certain large, flattish stone, near the pond, as directed, and in a few minutes her brother emerged from a thicket close by. She embraced him with the warm affection of a sister, but his greeting was rather cool, and he kept glancing about with suspicious eye, as if expecting to see some un-



welcome face peering out from behind a tree or rock. Sam had changed but little in appearance, since Jessie last saw him. He was a trifle taller, and seemed less bold and frank than formerly ; and the coarse, sensual

and vulgar expression which his countenance had for several years been assuming, was more painfully apparent than ever. He looked well and hearty, however, and was evidently the same Sam Hapley that he had always been.

Jessie made it her first business to endeavor to persuade her brother to go with her to Mrs. Page's. But though she used all her powers of persuasion, he resolutely refused, from first to last, to show himself in town. He said he slept the night previous in an old, unoccupied barn, near the pond, and had a little food, which he had bought with money given to him by the sheriff. He had seen no one who knew him since he came to Highburg, and he intended to leave the town that afternoon, or early the next morning, "to seek his fortune," as he expressed it. But Jessie could gain no information as to what his purposes really were. The most he divulged was, that he should not accept of his mother's proposition, nor even go to see her; and he wound up by saying, that he should not have come to see Jessie, only he thought she might be able to let him have a few dollars.

Notwithstanding this cutting remark, and the unfeel-

ing manner in which it was uttered, Jessie would probably have offered her brother assistance, had it been in her power to do so. But she had not a dollar in the world, and she told him so. He then proposed that she should borrow a small sum from Mrs. Page; but Jessie firmly declined to do this, saying that nothing would tempt her to borrow, so long as she had no means for repaying the debt. When Sam found that there was no prospect of his accomplishing his selfish purpose, he seemed in haste to close the interview, that he might at once resume his travels. But Jessie still clung to him, with tears, beseeching him to reconsider his resolution.

"There is poor Henry," she said; "what will he think, when he finds that you have been here, and gone off, without seeing him?"

"I can't help it," replied Sam. "I should like to see him well enough, but I've determined I won't show myself in Highburg again, and I won't—so that's an end of it."

"And the graves of father and Benny—can you go away without making them *one* visit?" inquired Jessie, her tears bursting forth afresh.

"I can't do *them* any good," he replied, after a moment's pause. "Come, it's of no use to tease so, for I've made up my mind to go off this afternoon, and I shall go, whether or no."

But Jessie did continue to "tease," and her importunities were at length rewarded by a promise that he would remain there another night, and that he would meet Jessie and Henry at an early hour the next morning, in the burial-ground, which was in a secluded spot.

On her way home, Jessie called at Mr. Allen's, to get permission for her brother to accompany her in the morning. Henry was at home, for he did not now go to school, Mr. Allen having need of his services on the farm. Jessie did not think it best to say anything about Sam, but merely requested that Henry might be allowed to make an early visit to the graveyard, with her, the next morning. She had been thinking, ever since the snow began to disappear, of planting some young trees or shrubs over the spot where her father and brother were laid; and as the time to transplant trees had now arrived, she determined to perform this act of filial and sisterly affection, in

connection with her interview with Sam. Mrs. Allen readily consented to Jessie's request, and added that her husband would probably furnish them with some young trees suitable for their purpose.

Jessie reached home a little before the rest of the young folks returned from school. Some curiosity was manifested about her sudden disappearance, but she let no one into her confidence except Mrs. Page, to whom she related the adventures of the afternoon. Early the next morning, Jessie departed as quietly as possible, to keep her appointment. She took with her a small package, which Mrs. Page, in the kindness of her heart, had hastily made up for the erring boy. It contained several articles of underclothing, which Marcus had outgrown, and some cold meat, bread, and other substantial provisions for the body.

On arriving at Mr. Allen's, Jessie found her brother ready for her. Mr. Allen had given him two tall and straight beeches, and Mrs. A. had allowed him to take up a rose-bush and an althea from the front yard. With these on his shoulder, and a shovel, hoe and rake in his hand, he had about as much as he could carry.

"Mr. Allen and his wife are very kind, to give us these," said Jessie, after they had left the yard.

"I know it," said Henry; "and I did n't ask them, either — they did it of their own accord."

"You seem to like your new home rather better than you did at first," continued Jessie.

"I like Mrs. Allen a good deal better than I used to — she is n't cross to me, now," replied Henry.

"I suppose that is because you try harder to please her than you used to, is n't it?" inquired Jessie.

"Yes, I suppose it's partly that," said Henry; "but I'm sure I have n't changed any more than she has. She used to scold me, whether I did right or wrong. Now she hardly ever scolds, even when I deserve it."

"Still, I think you deserve most of the credit for the change," said Jessie. "If Mrs. Allen was ever cross or unkind to you, I'm satisfied it was because she thought you did not try to please her. I knew it was out of pure kindness to you that she consented to take you, in the first place; and I think she would always have treated you as kindly as she does now, if — but we wont rake over past errors. I'm very glad they're dead and buried, and I hope they'll

never rise again. And now, whom do you suppose we're going to see?"

"I did n't know we were going to see anybody," replied Henry.

"What should you say, if you should meet Samuel?" inquired Jessie.

"What, our Sam! is *he* here?" exclaimed Henry, stopping short, and resting his burden upon the ground.

Jessie then related to him the occurrences of the previous afternoon, as they walked on towards the burial-ground. Henry seemed much pleased with the idea of seeing his brother, and hurried along so fast, with his burden, that Jessie could hardly keep up with him.

On reaching the graveyard, as they saw nothing of Sam, they proceeded to the lot where their father and brother were laid, and prepared to set out the trees and shrubs. There was no stone to mark the spot, but Jessie remembered too well the two little gravelly mounds, to need anything to guide her to the locality. Henry threw off his jacket, and went to work in good earnest with his shovel, pausing, every few minutes, to

look around in quest of Sam. Jessie, meanwhile, was busy with the hoe and rake, cleaning out and levelling the lot. The holes for the trees required to be large, and as the digging was rather hard, Henry found he had undertaken no trifling task. But he kept steadily at work, hoping, however, that the stronger arm of his brother would soon come, to "spell" him.

The two beeches were at length planted, each near the head of a grave; but Sam had not appeared, though it was half an hour later than the time he had appointed for the interview. Jessie and Henry, though disappointed and dejected, still hoped their brother would appear, thinking that his failure to keep the appointment might be owing to his having no means of telling the exact time of day, where he was. They kept on with their labor, and the shrubs were soon in their places at the foot of the graves, and the whole lot was put in as good order as the time would allow.

But they looked and waited in vain for Sam. He did not appear. After lingering around the burial-ground until it was nearly time for the academy bell to ring, they departed, sadly disappointed, and wonder-

ing whether Sam had taken alarm, and left town sooner than he intended, or whether he had agreed to the appointment merely to get rid of the importunities of his sister, and without any idea of keeping his promise. Jessie and Henry felt, however, that they had done a good work, though they had not accomplished the thing for which mainly they set out on their early morning errand.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOW AND SUBSTANCE.

“**M**OTHER,” said Ronald, one evening, as the family were sitting together in the twilight, “I wish we had a sugar-orchard. Only think — Charlie Doane and his little brother Tom have made three hundred and ten pounds of sugar, this year, without anybody’s help, and they’re going to have all the money for it. All their father did was to cut a part of the wood. Charlie is n’t fourteen years old, yet, and he’s got lots of money laid up. Why, he says they’ll get all of twenty-five dollars for their maple sugar, this year.”

“What does he intend to do with his money?” inquired Mrs. Page.

“Oh, he saves it up,” replied Ronald; “he does n’t spend a cent of it; and when he gets a lot together, he

puts it in the bank. He's earning money all the time — I never see such a fellow. Why, he's round by day-break, every morning, now, after greens — he sells them over to the village, and picks up lots of change, that way. There, I never thought of it before — I mean to pick some greens, and see if I can't sell them, and get some money to pay my note. Will you buy them, mother?"

"I'll buy as many as we can use," replied Mrs. Page; "but if you are as industrious as Charlie is, I can't promise to take all you bring."

"Oh, I never shall be as industrious as he is," said Ronald; "or at any rate, I never shall pick up money as fast as he does."

"I should n't like to have you do just as Charlie Doane is doing, if you could," added Mrs. Page. "I like to see children industrious, and it is well enough for them to earn a little money for themselves, occasionally; but when I see them very eager to get money to hoard up, and never spending a cent, if they can help it, I'm afraid they are training themselves to be selfish, close-fisted worshippers of money. I should tremble for Charlie, if he were my boy."

"His father praises him up to a great rate, for earning so much money, and saving it up so close," said Otis. "I was in Mr. Todd's store, the other day, when he was telling about it. He said Charlie would be a rich man, yet."

"I'm afraid Mr. Doane, himself, thinks too much of his money," continued Mrs. Page.

"Mr. Doane?" said Marcus, apparently awakening from a reverie; "he's a complete miser. When old Mrs. Lane lost her cow, and the people were making up a subscription to buy her another, everybody thought that as Mr. Doane sold the cow to her only a little while before, and made a good profit on it, he would put his name down for five dollars, at least; but he refused to give a single cent towards it. And yet he's worth fifteen thousand dollars, at the least calculation. He's an old miser, and it's my opinion Charlie will be another, if he lives."

"You're rather free in your remarks," said Mrs. Page, smiling. "Do you remember the article in the 'Wreath,' a month or two ago, about speaking evil of our neighbors?"

"Yes, ma'am, I remember it," replied Marcus, "and

I believe I've only carried out its doctrine. If I recollect right, it took the ground that we ought not to speak of the faults of another, except for a good object. Now I had a good object in saying what I did about Mr. Doane. Charlie's miserly example had evidently made quite an impression on Ronald, and it was necessary to hold up Mr. Doane's character in its true light, to counteract that impression. That's all I did."

"Well, mother," said Ronald, "you buy my greens, and I wont hoard up my money. I'll pay my note, first, and then I'll buy one of those new-fashioned caps that Ed Baldwin has got. I wish I could have one of those caps, before examination day."

"There, Ronald," said Oscar, "do'n't begin to talk a fortnight beforehand about what you will wear to the examination—that sounds a little too much like the girls. I overheard some of the girls, to-day, talking about the exhibition; and they did n't have a word to say about the lessons, or performances, or anything of that sort—it was all dress, dress, dress. One was going to wear white muslin, and another pink, and one was going to do her hair up in this way,

and another in that way, and so on to the end of the chapter. I wonder if the girls ever talk about anything besides dress, and looks, and such things."

"I think they do," replied Jessie. "I suppose I've been among the girls at least as much as you have, to-day, and I don't remember hearing a word about dress or personal looks."

"Then you were very fortunate," said Oscar. "I heard enough about those subjects, at any rate. One girl said she'd give anything in the world, if her hair would only curl; another had got some beautiful new lace to trim her dress; and another did n't intend to wear any jewelry, at the examination, but was going to trim herself up with buds and flowers, instead. One might have supposed, from the way they talked, that we were to have a grand examination of dresses, and nothing else."

"And Mr. Paul Pry was sneaking around, listening to it all, was he?" inquired Kate.

"No, I did n't have to listen, for I could n't help hearing," replied Oscar. "But I did n't say who they were, and if you wont expose them, Kate, I wont."

"Oh, I care nothing about your exposing us,"

retorted Kate; "I was only thinking how you had exposed yourself. I suppose I was one of the party he refers to. Abby Leonard happened to come along, and you know she's always talking about dress, and she began to tell what she was going to wear exhibition day. So the others joined in for a few minutes, and that was the origin of all this fuss about 'dress, dress, dress.'"

This retort, which was uttered in a somewhat bitter tone, surprised Oscar very much, for Kate was one of the best-natured of girls, and he had never before heard her speak in this way. He had evidently touched her in a tender spot, and he began to think he had committed a serious offence. So he stammered out the best apology he could think of, saying that he only spoke of the matter good-naturedly, and meant no offence to any one. Ronald and Otis, seeing how the battle was going, now came gallantly to the rescue of Oscar, and volunteered their testimony to his side of the case. The girls, they said, were all the time talking about dress — they noticed it every day.

"Well, supposing we *do* talk rather more about

dress than we ought to," said Kate, "I think you are a pretty set of folks to rebuke us for it. There's Oscar — there is n't a boy or young man in the academy that is so particular about dress as he is; and Otis can never go within forty feet of a looking-glass, without stopping to smooth his hair; and as to Ronald, if he had n't just showed what's running in his head, nobody would have thought of talking about dress."

Ronald and Otis both attempted to reply to this speech at once, but Mrs. Page stopped them, and then said:

"This debate is getting to be a little too spicy, and I think it had better be brought to a close. In my opinion, both sides are partly right, and both are partly wrong. I have no doubt that many of the girls think and talk a great deal too much of what they shall wear, and how they shall look. It is a great fault, look at it in what light you will. There is nothing so becoming in woman or girl as simplicity and neatness in dress. It is a barbarous taste that is fond of extravagant and gaudy apparel, or showy jewelry. And then, this taste is not only bad in itself,

but it leads to a great many evils. A woman who has it soon becomes frivolous and vain ; she overlooks honest merit, in plain attire ; she is jealous and envious of those who make more show than she does ; she becomes extravagant and reckless, and perhaps drives her father or husband into bankruptcy, that she may have the means to gratify her selfish taste. It is all wrong, from beginning to end. But then it was hardly fair in Osear to intimate that *all* the girls are given to this folly. I believe there are some who think and talk of other things besides dress."

"I suppose I was a little too sweeping in saying that," said Oscar. "But I do think it is a great fault in many girls, that they think and say so much about dress. I've thought of it a great many times."

"Now you're talking sensibly," said Aunt Fanny. "I think we all, ladies as well as gentlemen, will agree with you there. We are all acquainted with women and girls who seem to think more of dressing well and looking pretty than of anything else. I have known women whose whole souls seemed to be bound up in dress ; but their souls were very small, you may depend upon that."

"I think there is something very belittling and dwarfing to the mind, in a love of dress and finery," said Mrs. Page. "I knew a woman who was a great lover of dress, who, at the age of forty, had no more judgment, or stability, or strength of mind, than a child ten years old; and yet she was naturally a person of good capacities. She devoted her mind to such petty trifles, that instead of expanding as she grew older, it shrivelled up."

"I have heard," said Oscar, "that intelligent foreigners are astonished by the parade of silks, and satins, and jewelry, which American ladies make in the streets, and in the hotels and watering places. They say our merchants' and mechanics' wives and daughters often dress more extravagantly than the nobility of Europe."

"Mother used to say," said Jessie, "that the best rule is, to dress so that people will not notice what you have on. I think if I had ever so much money, I should not want to dress so as to attract attention, and occasion remark; neither do I want to dress so poorly, or be so far out of fashion, that people cannot help noticing me."

"That is a safe and excellent rule," said Mrs. Page, "to dress so that people will not recollect what you had on. There is a command in the Bible, particularly addressed to women, which we should do well to remember: 'Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.'"

"What is the name of the firm that Abby's father is the head of?" inquired Marcus, who had brought in a lamp, and was reading the morning newspaper.

"Leonard, Vandenberg & Co.," replied Ronald; "I thought everybody in town knew that by heart, she's told of it so many times."

"They have failed," said Marcus, his eye still upon the paper; and then he read the telegraph despatch which announced the fact. It was as follows:

"Leonard, Vandenberg & Co., one of our largest commission houses, suspended to-day. Mr. Vandenberg mysteriously disappeared last week, and it is rumored that he has embezzled a large portion of the

firm's assets. The other partners have surrendered everything, but the failure is believed to be a very bad one."

"What will poor Abby do, now?" exclaimed Jessie, with unaffected sympathy.

"I don't pity her one mite — she'd no business to be stuck up so," said Kate, who had not yet fully recovered her usual good nature.

"Her pride will have a fall now, wont it?" added Otis.

"I shouldn't wonder if it proved the best thing that ever happened to her," said Oscar.

"I wonder if she has heard of it, yet," said Ronald. "I've a good mind to go and tell her — would you?"

"She's heard of it, before this time — bad news travels fast," said Mrs. Page.

"Well, I'm sorry for the poor girl — it must be a terrible blow to her," said Marcus.

And so one and another commented on the news, most of the little company expressing sympathy for Abby, though she was by no means a favorite with any of them. Even Kate so far relented, before the matter was dropped, as to express the hope that none

of the scholars would "twit" Abby about the sudden change in her position.

Abby appeared at school, the next morning, holding her head as high as ever, and apparently as calm and happy as though nothing out of the usual course had occurred. She must have been conscious, it would seem, that she was the centre of many sidelong glances, and that there was an unusual amount of whispering going on among the girls; but she did not appear to notice these significant signs. So it began to be believed that she had not heard of her father's failure. After a while, however, one miss who had had many a sharp encounter with Abby, unable to stand the painful suspense any longer, bluntly put the question to her old enemy, in the presence of several of her school-mates —

"Did you see the Boston papers, yesterday?"

"It's nothing to you whether I did or not," instantly replied Abby, her face white with passion, and her frame trembling with excitement.

"Well, you need n't be so touchy about it," replied the other girl. "I only asked, because I thought it would be doing you a favor to tell you your father had failed, if you did n't know it."

"I wish folks would mind their own business, and let me alone," said Abby in the same angry tone, and she turned away from the group, who had listened to this conversation.

"I declare, she has a queer way of expressing her sorrow," said the other girl, before Abby had got out of hearing.

Abby heard of her father's failure, almost as soon as she reached her boarding-place, after school, the previous day. The intelligence fell upon her like a thunderbolt. She retired to her room, and cried for several hours, and finally, nature becoming exhausted, she sobbed herself to sleep. The next morning, the question arose in her mind, whether she should stay at home, and thus avoid meeting her school-mates, whose taunts she was perhaps conscious she had reason to expect; or whether she should go boldly and mingle with them, exhibiting before them a total unconcern in regard to the failure. She finally adopted the latter course, and we have seen how far she succeeded. There were some among her associates who longed to whisper a word of sympathy or encouragement in her ear; but the bravado air she assumed for,

bade, and the poor girl found she had doomed herself to hug the crushing burden secretly to her heart, without a loving word of pity from any of her young associates.

The academy was dismissed in the afternoon, and Abby was hurrying away from her schoolmates, when an arm was softly laid upon her shoulder, and, turning, she found Jessie by her side. In the kindest and most delicate way, Jessie alluded to the misfortune that had overtaken Abby, and expressed her sympathy for her. And then she went on to tell her how this very loss might prove, in the end, a great blessing to her family, and especially to herself. It might lead her to depend upon herself, instead of others; to think less of fashion, and show, and position, and wealth, and more of a well-cultivated mind, an amiable spirit, and a useful life. It might, in fact, be the making of her, if, instead of sitting down and repining, she would now begin to live for some good purpose. And then Jessie argued that the misfortune was not half so bad as it might have been. Mr. Leonard was not an embezzler, like his partner, but had honorably surrendered his property. The loss of money, she said, was nothing compared with the loss of integrity and character.

Abby at first received Jessie's condolence rather cavalierly. She said her family always had lived in style, and she did not believe they would come down now. Her father was a great merchant, she said, and if he had lost some of his money, he knew how to make plenty more. In fact, she didn't consider it any great thing if he had failed. But this assumed indifference to her trouble soon melted away under the kind and sympathizing words of Jessie, and Abby at length fully opened her heart, and found some degree of relief in pouring out her griefs in the ear of her friend.

CHAPTER XVI.

GETTING UP IN THE WORLD.

THE academy term was now about to close, and the students were quite earnestly engaged in reviewing studies, preparatory to the approaching examination. Nothing else was talked much about, even by the boys. Ronald came marching into the house one afternoon, fresh from school, repeating the words :

“Step by step—step by step—step by step ;” adding, “that’s our countersign, mother—the scholar’s countersign ; Mr. Upton gave it to us to-day.”

“I thought a countersign was something to be kept private in the camp ; but you seem to take considerable pains to make yours public,” said Mrs. Page.

“Well, it wont make any difference,” said Ronald ; “Mr. Upton called it a countersign, but he did n’t tell us to keep it secret.”

“What did he give you such a countersign, for?” inquired Mrs. Page.

“O, he was telling us how we might get so as to know more than common folks,” replied Ronald. “He said that when he was a boy, all great and learned people seemed to be perched on the top of a high pinnacle, and he used to envy them; but he said he had no idea, then, how they got up there, only he thought there was some sort of a miraculous good luck about it. But he said he had since discovered that there was no royal road to learning, and that if any man wanted to get to the top of the pinnacle, he had got to go up step by step. He could n’t fly up, nor leap up, nor sail up in a balloon, nor go up in a railroad train, nor ride up on somebody’s back, nor pull himself up by the waistband of his trousers, nor —”

“Why, Ronald Page, he said no such thing!” interposed Kate, who had just entered the room, with Jessie.

“Well, it amounted to the same thing, — I’ve got the idea, at any rate,” replied Ronald. “What he meant was, that everybody had to work to get up there — they went step by step, step by step; he kept

bringing that in, every minute. Was there ever such a person as Porson, mother?"

"Yes, there was a very learned Englishman named Porson; he was a celebrated Greek scholar and a critic," replied Mrs. Page.

"He was the man, then," said Ronald; "for Mr. Upton told us he used to say any one might become as good a critic as he was, if he would only take trouble to make himself so; and Mr. Upton said that sometimes when Porson wanted to be sure and learn a thing, he would read it a dozen times, and then copy it off six times. That was the way he got to be so learned and famous, I suppose."

"It seems to me you paid unusual attention to Mr. Upton's remarks," said Jessie; "you've repeated them very well."

"I don't believe I shall forget that 'step by step' very soon; why, I should think he said that over more than twenty times."

"I thought, while he was making the remarks, of that French engraving of the top of the pyramid, in your portfolio," said Jessie, addressing Aunt Fanny.

"What, that soldier on the top of a pyramid? Let me find it, will you, Aunt Fanny?" said Ronald.





Permission was given, and Ronald soon found the picture, a copy of which is given on the opposite page. It represents a French grenadier at the top of an Egyptian pyramid. You perceive he is a little elevated — about four hundred and eighty feet above the surface of the earth — and may well be pardoned for exhibiting a slight degree of enthusiasm.

“The engraving is a pretty good illustration of Mr. Upton’s remarks,” said Jessie. “You know the pyramids, a little way off, look as if their sides were smooth; at least they look so in pictures. Now, if we should see a man on top of one of them, we should wonder how he got there. We should think there was some miracle about it, or else that he had got faculties that common people do n’t possess, — just as some people think when they see a learned man. But if we go up to the pyramid, we shall find that its sides are composed of steps, all the way up, and that the way to reach the top is to climb those steps, one by one.”

“I always thought the sides of the pyramids were smoothed off even, till I saw that picture,” said Ronald.

“When I went to school,” said Mrs. Page, “our teacher used to encourage us, if we got disheartened, by telling us that ‘what man has done, man may do.’ I heard that saying so often, that I got perfectly sick of it; but, after all, there is a good deal of meaning in it. It is n’t literally true that what one man has done, any other man can do. I might study as hard and as long as Milton did, and yet I never should be able to write such a poem as *Paradise Lost*. Some men are more highly endowed by God than others. But, by patient effort, and perseverance, and quietly going along step by step, as Mr. Upton says, we can do wonders. We can accomplish anything, in fact, that does not require a very rare and peculiar endowment from God. This is the way most people become eminent, and it is the way all become learned. They toil up the steep mountain, one step at a time, and if they get far above the crowd, you may know that they have worked hard, and have a right to swing their hats a little, with honest pride, as the soldier in the picture is doing.”

“O, mother!” exclaimed Ronald, “did you know Kate was admitted to the Grade of Honor, to-day?”

“No, I’ve heard nothing about it,” said Mrs. Page.

"Well, she was," added Ronald; "and it was lucky for her, for it was the last chance—there wont be any more promotions before examination."

"I'm glad to hear she succeeded; but did n't you get in, too?" inquired Mrs. Page.

"No, ma'am," replied Ronald, looking a little ashamed; "I did n't expect to. But Marcus said I should have got in, if I had n't whispered so much."

"Do n't you think it would have been better if you had denied yourself the gratification of whispering, and got admitted to the Grade of Honor?" inquired Mrs. Page.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Ronald, "I wish I had; but it's too late now. But, after all, I should n't care about going in at the eleventh hour, just for a fortnight; I should feel as if I did n't hardly belong there."

"O, yes, you do n't think much of sour grapes, do you?" said Kate, who thought this was a reflection upon herself.

"Better late than never: better get in at the eleventh hour than not at all," said Mrs. Page.

"Well, mother, I'll get into the Grade of Honor at

the very beginning of the next term,—you see if I do n't," added Ronald.

"I hope you will," said Mrs. Page; "and if you resolve to do so, I've no doubt you will."

This Grade of Honor, which they were talking about, had been established in the academy, at the commencement of that term, as a substitute for prizes. It had been customary to award prizes, at the end of each term, for good behavior and successful scholarship. But there were always many disappointed faces when the awards were made; and, as the prizes were few, and the attainments and merits of the best scholars were often so nearly equal that it was difficult to discriminate between them, it not seldom happened that some who failed to get a prize were as deserving as some who competed successfully for that honor. So, at the beginning of the present term, Mr. Upton said he was going to try a new system, as an experiment, which would allow every scholar to reach the highest honor, if he chose to. The system was as follows:

Two grades or classes were established, the first and lower being known as the Grade of Fidelity, and

the higher as the Grade of Honor. Excellence of deportment, and diligent effort and general faithfulness in studies, were the passport to the first grade. It was not necessary to be a very bright scholar, to get into the Grade of Fidelity. It was open to all who made faithful endeavors, and who paid a decent respect to the rules of the school. Those who, after at least a month's probation in the Grade of Fidelity, distinguished themselves by their fidelity to all the duties of the school-room, and by the general excellence of their moral characters (mere intellectual superiority, you will observe, was not taken into the account), were admitted to the Grade of Honor. The preceptor kept a credit and demerit account with each scholar, and by this, principally, his or her standing was determined. Every alternate week candidates were admitted to each grade.

The ceremony of admission to the grades was quite interesting. Those who were to enter the Grade of Fidelity, were called out by the preceptor, and arranged themselves in a line before his desk. He then addressed to them a few words of congratulation and advice, after which he said :

“I now present these candidates for admission to the Grade of Fidelity. If it be your will that they be accepted, you will please to signify it.”

The members of the grade having previously been seated together, in the front desks, now voted on the question, by putting into a box that was passed round a slip of paper on which was usually inscribed, “Yes —all.” If a member objected to any candidate, he wrote, “Yes —all except ———,” naming the person he objected to. Unless a candidate was objected to by at least one-fourth of the members, he was admitted. When it was ascertained that the vote was affirmative, the preceptor hung a blue silk ribbon around the neck of each candidate. The members then filed out from their seats, and after giving the hand of fellowship to their new comrades, the whole company joined hands, and sung one verse of a song, commencing:

“We’re a band of faithful friends.”

The blue ribbon was the badge of the Grade of Fidelity, and was worn at the reception of candidates, at the examination of the academy, and on other special

occasions. The scholars in this grade enjoyed no privileges over their fellows; but it was considered quite important to gain admittance to it, unless one was content to be rated very low, morally if not mentally. Before the term ended, about three-fourths of the students had been admitted to the ranks of the "Fidels," as they sometimes abbreviated their name. Some, however, were afterwards degraded; for if a member fell below the standard, or was guilty of any serious offence, he was dismissed from the grade.

It was not so easy to get into the Grade of Honor. One had to be very exemplary in conduct, and very pure in character, to gain admittance there. Less than one in six of the scholars passed this searching ordeal. The names of candidates to this grade were posted up in the school-room, three days before the ceremony of admission. Any member of the academy had a right to object to a candidate, and could privately inform the preceptor of his reasons. If a candidate was known to be profane, or untruthful, or dishonest, or chewed or smoked tobacco, or was addicted to any other bad habit, he was rejected, no matter how exemplary his conduct in school might be.

When the hour came to admit candidates to the Grade of Honor, those to whom no valid objection had been made, presented themselves, in front of the preceptor's desk, the members of the grade being seated upon the platform. A separate ballot was taken for each candidate, and if one-fourth voted nay, he was rejected. The preceptor then affixed the badge of the grade, a pink silk rosette, to the left breast of the accepted candidate; and then, taking him by the hand, he addressed to him a few affectionate words of welcome. When all had gone through this ceremony, the members of the grade formed a ring, inside of which the candidates were admitted, one at a time. After making the circuit, and receiving the hand of fellowship from each one, the new member fell into the ranks, and another candidate passed through the same ceremony, and so on to the end. The whole school then arose and sang a song beginning:

“Who are these, with honors decked;”

the members of the grade, meanwhile, standing in a circle, with clasped hands. When the singing was

over, they returned to their desks, the school remaining standing until they had taken their seats. So ended the ceremony of the initiation.

Those who belonged to the Grade of Honor enjoyed sundry privileges that were denied to other students. They could leave their seats without permission, and could even leave the room during study hours, without being called to account. They had access at all times to the library, while the other students enjoyed its privileges under some restrictions. They were also clothed with a sort of monitorial power, and as their testimony was received by the teachers with unwavering faith, it was counted a poor time to brew mischief when one of this class was around. It was of course expected that they would never take improper advantage of their privileges, and, like the other grade, they were liable to lose their position if found unworthy.

Jessie was among the first who were admitted to the Grade of Honor. Ronald and Otis, after some delay, worked their way into the Grade of Fidelity, but did not rise higher. Kate, as has been already stated, rose to the higher grade on the last day when promotions were made, for that term.

Abby Leonard did not remain long in Highburg, after her father's failure. After the first day, it was evident to all that she was troubled and humbled, and those who had been inclined to exult over her downfall, now began to pity her. But a message calling her home soon came, and she was apparently not sorry to get away from a place which had become so unpleasant to her. Only a few of her associates knew of her intention to go, until she had left town.

CHAPTER XVII.

TIDINGS.

JESSIE heard nothing from her brother Sam, until about a fortnight after her interview with him at Round Hill Pond, when Marcus called her attention to the following paragraph in a Boston newspaper :

“A FIGHT. — The police were called last night to quell a fight in a notorious dance cellar in North Street, which for a time threatened serious consequences. There were several bloody heads in the crowd, but the only person seriously injured was a Vermont youth, sixteen or seventeen years old, who, it is said, being crazed with liquor, joined in the melee, attacking both parties with equal vigor. His name is said to be Hapley. His injuries are so serious that he was sent to the hospital.”

There could be scarcely a doubt as to who this

youth was, and Jessie proposed to hasten at once to the relief of her wayward brother. Her friends, however, prevailed upon her to abandon this purpose, Marcus promising to write forthwith to Mr. Preston, Oscar's father, who lived in Boston, and ask him to make inquiries in regard to the injured boy. Marcus accordingly wrote to his uncle, and in a few days received the following reply :

“ BOSTON, May 17, 185—.

“ MY DEAR NEPHEW:— Your favor of the 15th came to hand, and it afforded me much pleasure to comply with your request. I called at the hospital this morning, and saw the young man who was injured in the fight. He acknowledged he was the brother of the young lady who lives with you, and said if he had followed her advice he never should have been in this scrape. He was not hurt so badly as was at first supposed, and is getting along very well. The doctor says he will be discharged in a few days. He did not seem inclined to say much, but he wished me to inform his sister that he was not intoxicated at the time of the assault, and that he took no part in the fight, but was only looking on. He says he drank nothing that night but a glass of lager beer. I advised him to leave the city, as soon as he was able, and to go back

to Vermont; but he said he had no home there, and no friends to look to for assistance. I then tried to persuade him to avoid bad associates, and to seek steady and respectable employment, if he remained in the city. I also gave him my card, and told him that if he would call on me, after he was discharged, I would try to help him procure employment. You may assure his sister that if I can do anything to save him from ruin, it shall be most gladly done.

"I am glad to hear so favorable a report from Oscar. I can never repay you and your mother and aunt for the obligation you have laid me under, in doing what you have done for that boy. He has persevered so long, that I think his reform will be permanent. We have concluded to let him spend a week or two of his vacation with us, if you can spare him as well as not. If he comes, send him as soon as you please after the term closes. We should be very glad to have you and your mother or Aunt Fanny come with him, if you can leave home.

"Please tell Oscar that Jerry, his runaway cousin, has got home. He was wrecked at sea, and given up for lost, and has experienced any amount of startling adventures and hair-breadth escapes. His story is quite an interesting one, but it is so long that I will not attempt to give it here. Oscar will learn all the particulars when he comes home. Jerry says he has

had enough of going to sea, and means to settle down on the land, now. He arrived here last week, after an absence of about fifteen months, and started for his home the same night.

“Our family are all well, and send love to all the folks. Oscar’s old friend, Willie Davenport, or ‘Whistler,’ as he is still called, is spending the evening with Ralph, and wishes to be remembered to Oscar. Ralph has teased me to forward the little toy you will find enclosed, as a present to Ronald. It is designed to be twirled round by the strings, — I suppose he will understand it. Ralph has taken quite a fancy to Ronald, although he has never seen him. Hoping to see you soon, I remain

“Your affectionate uncle,

“HENRY PRESTON.”

This letter greatly relieved Jessie’s anxiety. Before going to bed, she wrote an affectionate letter to her brother, assuring him of her continued love and interest, and entreating him to go to his mother, and accept the situation she had procured for him.

Oscar was delighted to hear of the safe arrival of his cousin Jerry. The two boys had at one time been very intimate. Jerry’s parents lived in a small backwoods village in Maine, named Brookdale. His father

was engaged in the logging business, and also carried on a farm. When Oscar was about fourteen years old, he was so unmanageable at home, and was so rapidly forming bad acquaintances, that his father sent him down to Brookdale, where he spent several months, and would have remained longer, had he not got into a serious "scrape," which compelled him to leave town. Oscar's influence upon Jerry, who was about a year younger than himself, was very unfavorable. Indeed, it was mainly owing to this bad influence that Jerry ran away from home, a few weeks after Oscar left the village, and started on the long voyage from which he had just returned.* The vessel in which Jerry shipped was wrecked on the homeward passage, and he was supposed to have been lost, until his unexpected appearance in Boston, as mentioned in Mr. Preston's letter. Oscar, since he had tried to reform, had regretted very much the evil influence he had exerted upon Jerry; and, though he never said anything about it, he felt that he was, to some extent, responsible for his cousin's ruin. It is

*The career of Jerry is more fully related in the first two volumes of this series, "Oscar" and "Clinton."

not strange, therefore, that he was rejoiced to hear that his old comrade and pupil in mischief was not dead, but alive, and had still a chance to mend his ways, and become an honest and respectable man.

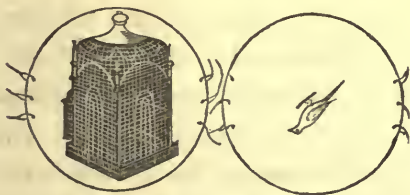
"Who knows but that father will come home, yet?" said Marcus, who had sat musing, while the others were talking about Jerry.

"I gave up all hope of that long ago," replied his mother. "It is over ten years since your father sailed, and it is idle to expect ever to see him again in this world."

"I do n't think so, mother," replied Marcus. "You know the whalers pass in the neighborhood of a good many islands in the Pacific that are inhabited only by savages. Now is n't it possible that father was wrecked on one of these islands, and is still there, and unable to get away? We know such things *have* happened. I have read of sailors being wrecked on some of these islands, and living with the savages a good many years, before they could communicate with any vessel. I sha'n't give up all hopes of seeing father yet, for five years, at least."

"I cherished that hope, until it seemed like hoping against hope," replied Mrs. Page, sadly.

While this conversation was going on, Ronald and Otis had been deeply engaged with the toy sent by Oscar's brother. It consisted of a circular card, on one side of which was painted a bird-cage, and on the



other a bird. There were strings on each side of the card, by which it could be rapidly twirled round, which operation made the bird look as if he were actually in the cage. The engraving which we give of this little toy necessarily represents it as composed of two cards, but there is only one. Do you know why the bird is represented upside down? Did you ever notice that the top of one side of a coin is always the bottom of the other side? Both of these facts are to be explained on the same principle. We do not turn over a coin as we do the leaf of a book, but we reverse the top and bottom. As the card

revolves, the bird will of course show himself right side up.

"Ronald, can you explain why it is that the bird looks as if he were in the cage?" asked Marcus, after he had examined the toy.

"I suppose it's because the card revolves so fast that we see both sides at once," replied Ronald.

"That is hardly a philosophical explanation," said Marcus. "The true reason is, the image of the bird is brought to the retina of the eye before the image of the cage has passed away, and so both unite, and produce the image of a bird and cage. The image of an object on the retina does not vanish the instant the object is withdrawn, but is retained a brief period afterward. This is the reason that two objects may be seen in the same place at once, while each of them is presented to the retina but half the time."

Aunt Fanny said she had seen a mouse and a trap represented in this way. She also suggested that the body and legs of a man might be painted on one side, and his arms and head on the other; or a horse on one side and his rider on the other; or a portrait, and a frame; or a cell, and a prisoner; and several other devices were named.

It was settled that Oscar should avail himself of his father's invitation, and spend his vacation in Boston. He promised Jessie that he would try to find Sam, and persuade him to return to Vermont. He also promised Ronald that he would take charge of sundry cakes of maple sugar which the latter desired to send to Ralph, in return for his present.

This invitation home was as unexpected as it was agreeable to Oscar. He had not anticipated visiting Boston until the next autumn. It was judged, however, that he had become so fixed in his good purposes and habits, there would be no risk in allowing him to return for a week or two to the scene of his former temptations and misdeeds.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SURPRISE PARTY.

THE twentieth of May at length came, and the academic term closed with a searching examination of the several classes. It went a little deeper than faces or dresses, and revealed to the assembled magnates of the town something of the daily habits, the intellectual standing and the private character of each pupil. The result, as a whole, was quite favorable to the institution, and there were very few of the scholars who positively reflected no credit upon it. It was evident enough where the blame lay, in these cases — the school register told the story.

Mr. Upton invited his assistants, Marcus and Jessie, to take tea with him, at the close of the examination. They accepted the invitation, and after an hour or two, passed very pleasantly with their friend, Marcus pro-

posed to return home, as he had business to attend to. Mr. Upton said that, as he had been closely confined through the day, he thought the fresh air would do him good, so he proposed to walk home with them. As soon as they came in sight of Mrs. Page's house, an unusual display of lights attracted attention, and set them to conjecturing what it could mean. On entering the house, however, the mystery was quickly explained. All the scholars of the academy were there, and, with smiling faces and words of welcome, pressed forward to greet the new comers. The trustees, too, were soon discovered in the background, quietly enjoying the scene.

"Why, how secret they have kept this!" whispered Jessie to Marcus, as soon as she found an opportunity. "They did n't even let *me* know anything about it — I'm as much surprised as you are."

"They are pretty good for keeping a secret," replied Marcus, smiling.

"And who would have thought of seeing the trustees here, too? Why, I think it is quite a compliment to you," continued Jessie.

"Do you suppose there is to be any presentation?" whispered Marcus, with a look of concern.

"I don't know," replied Jessie; "but I should n't wonder if there was — you'd better prepare yourself for a speech."

After a season passed in games, and conversation, and pleasant social intercourse, the party were invited to the tables, which had been bountifully spread with good cheer by the scholars. The feast was despatched without any speeches or other formalities, but not without a merry interchange of good feeling, and a little of that "flow of soul" which, according to the newspaper reporters, is seldom wanting when a company of hungry people gather around a well-filled table, on any public or special occasion. After the collation, the company adjourned to the front rooms, and seemed unusually quiet, as if waiting for some expected performance. Pretty soon Marcus arose, and, with a roguish twinkle in his eye, said:

"Soon after I came in here, this evening, our friend, Miss Hapley, whispered to me that there would probably be a presentation, and advised me to be thinking of my speech. She was right, in her prediction. Here is a beautiful paper box which has just been put into my hand — though, I am happy to say,

WHO CAN FIND



A VIRTUOUS WOMAN!

FOR HER PRICE

IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES.

without any speech-making. If agreeable to the company, I will examine its contents."

No one objecting, Marcus, before opening the box, proceeded to describe it. It was covered with exquisitely tinted blue paper, ornamented with a rich pattern in gold. On the cover was a beautiful colored engraving, represented on the opposite page. The picture bore an inscription selected from the last chapter of the book of Proverbs, as follows :

"WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WOMAN? FOR HER PRICE IS
FAR ABOVE RUBIES."

Marcus then opened the box, and found within it another box, similar to the first, which bore this inscription, from the same book and chapter, with an appropriate illustration, similar in style to the first :

"SHE SEEKETH WOOL, AND FLAX, AND WORKETH WILLINGLY
WITH HER HANDS."

On opening this, a third box appeared, with a device illustrating this motto :

"SHE RISETH ALSO WHILE IT IS YET NIGHT, AND GIVETH
MEAT TO HER HOUSEHOLD."

This contained a fourth box, corresponding with the others, and bearing this motto :

“SHE GIRDETH HER LOINS WITH STRENGTH, AND STRENGTH-
ENETH HER ARMS.”

Within this Marcus found another box, which bore an engraving illustrating this verse :

“SHE LAYETH HER HANDS TO THE SPINDLE, AND HER HANDS
HOLD THE DISTAFF.”

Opening this, a sixth box disclosed itself, with this verse illustrated :

“SHE STRETCHETH OUT HER HAND TO THE POOR; YEA, SHE
REACHETH FORTH HER HANDS TO THE NEEDY.”

There was still another box, within this, with its engraving, thus inscribed :

“STRENGTH AND HONOR ARE HER CLOTHING; AND SHE
SHALL REJOICE IN TIME TO COME.”

And within this another box appeared, with this for its motto :

“SHE OPENETH HER MOUTH WITH WISDOM; AND IN HER
TONGUE IS THE LAW OF KINDNESS.”

Marcus opened this box, and found within it yet another, with a vignette illustrating this verse :

“MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE VIRTUOUSLY, BUT THOU
EXCELLEST THEM ALL.”

Within this, a tenth box was found, on the cover of which was inscribed :

“GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS; AND LET HER
OWN WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES.”

As Marcus opened these boxes, and read the inscriptions to the company, he freely gave expression to exclamations of surprise, mingled with running comments on the pictures. All present watched the proceedings with much interest, but none more than Jessie, to whom the whole affair was an enigma. She even asked a young lady at her side what Marcus could do with all those little boxes. She could imagine that a lady might find them useful, but the gift did not strike her as particularly appropriate for a young gentleman. It was not until the opening of the tenth box, that Jessie began to understand the matter. On opening this box, Marcus took from it a piece of paper, and read aloud the following :

“The trustees, teachers and pupils of Highburg Academy beg Miss Jessie Hapley to accept of this trifle, as a slight token of their appreciation of her many virtues, and of her faithful labors as a student and assistant teacher in the institution. ‘Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.’”

“The box contains a porte-monnaie,” continued Marcus, “which, from the weight, I should judge contained something more substantial than promises to pay. Here, Jessie, step this way.”

On hearing her name read, in the note of presentation, Jessie suddenly darted towards the entry, but was arrested by several of her schoolmates, who led her back, covered with blushes, to Marcus. She whispered a few words to the latter, who immediately arose, and said to the company :

“Miss Hapley requests me to say that she is too much overcome by this unexpected token of your kindness, to make a suitable acknowledgment in person ; but she desires me to express to the company her grateful thanks for the gift and the compliment bestowed upon her.”

As soon as Marcus had finished, there was a general clapping of hands, after which Mr. Upton started the Grade of Honor song, and the whole assembly joined, singing:

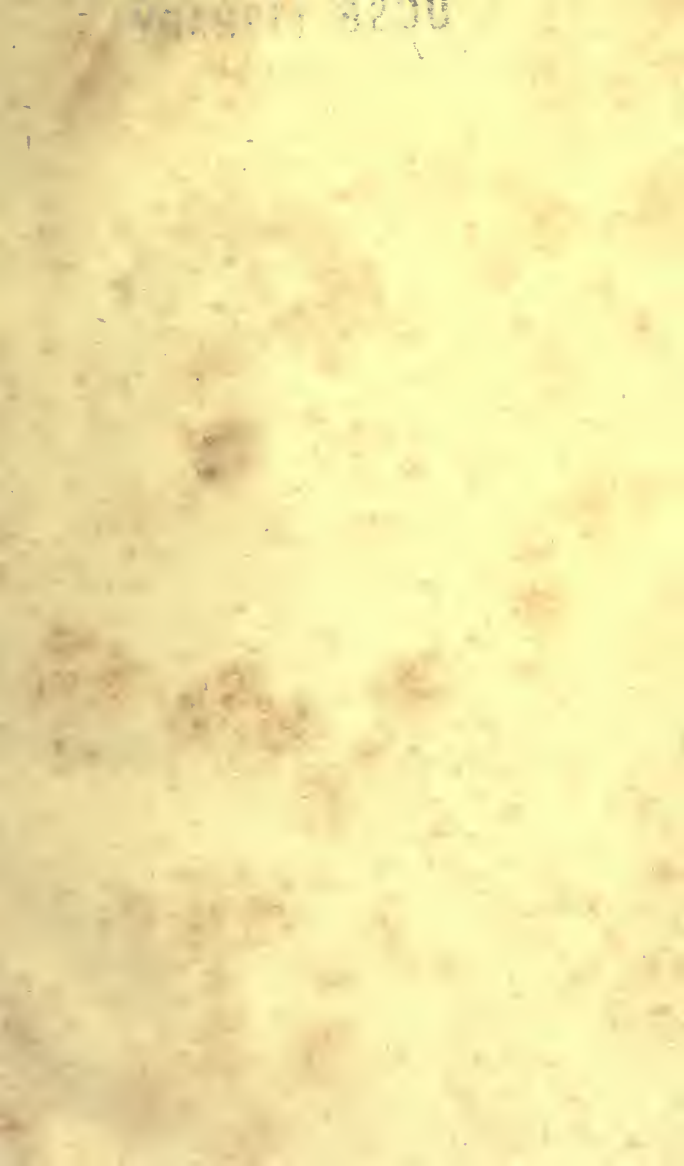
“Who are these, with honors decked?
The faithful, good and true;
They are spirits choice, select,
A brave but noble few.
Scorn they whatsoe’er is base,
They act no double part;
Honor’s written on their face,
And Duty in their heart.”

Those who lived at a distance began to depart, soon after these ceremonies, but the festivities were kept up by others for an hour longer. Jessie, on examining her porte-monnaie, found within it ten bright golden dollars,—a gift as timely, appropriate and acceptable to her, in her straitened circumstances, as it was well deserved on her part, and honorable to those who bestowed it.

Tears of gratitude and joy moistened Jessie’s eyes, long after every other eye under the roof was closed in slumber; and as her sleepless and busy thoughts lingered around the exciting scenes of the day and

evening, ever and anon darting back over the eventful months that were past, or flitting forward into the unknown future, she felt that she had reached a point where it was meet that she should "thank God and take courage."





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